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THE
CONSTABLE DE BOURBON.

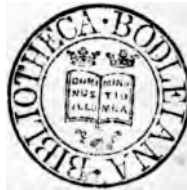
BY
WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH.

Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
Sans country or home,
We'll follow the Bourbon,
To plunder old Rome.

BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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THE
Constable de Bourbon.

BOOK II.
(CONTINUED.)

THE FLIGHT.

XVII.

THE INN AT SAINT-ANDRÉ.

AFTER his narrow escape from capture by Warthy, Bourbon made his way, as well as he could, across Dauphiné, his intention being either to proceed to Italy, or shape his course to Saint-Claude, in the Franche-Comté, as circumstances might dictate. The journey had to be performed entirely on foot, since he found it impossible to procure horses, and besides undergoing great fatigue, and running constant risks, he had to submit to extraordinary hardships.

On quitting the banks of the Rhône, the fugitives, fearing they might be followed—it being certain the ferryman would give information of their route—did not dare to enter any village where there was an inn, or even seek shelter in a cottage, but avoiding all frequented roads, after a toilsome walk of more than three hours, gained a thick forest, and entering it, passed the rest of the night beneath the trees.

Next morning they quitted the forest, and feeling faint and exhausted from want of food, they were compelled to halt at an auberge, kept by an old woman, in the outskirts of the little town of Saint-André. Astonished at the appetites of her guests, who ate with the voracity of famished wolves, the hostess did not trouble them with any questions, feeling sure she would get no response until they had satisfied their hunger. She then broached the topic on which the whole country was interested, and inquired whether the Constable de Bourbon had been taken.

"I hope not," replied Pomperant, regarding her fixedly.

"Then you are a partisan of the Constable?" rejoined the old woman.

"I won't deny it. I am Bourbon's partisan—his staunch partisan," returned Pomperant. "I hope he may give his enemies the slip—and I think he will, for I hear he is making his way through Languedoc to Narbonne, and if so, he will soon be safe across the Pyrenees."

"You have been misinformed," rejoined the hostess. "Some soldiers who were here late last night declared that Bourbon had crossed the Rhône below Ampuis."

"Diable! this is news!" exclaimed Pomperant, glancing uneasily at the Constable. "Can you tell us which way the soldiers went, dame?"

"Yes, I can satisfy you on that point," she replied. "They divided into two parties—one taking the road to Roussillon, the other to Beau-repaire. It may not please you, who have declared

yourself a partisan of the Constable, to hear what I have got to say. But I believe he will soon be taken."

"Before you give a reason for that opinion, let us have some more wine, dame," said Pomperant. "Your wine is sound and wholesome."

"Better wine cannot be had in all Dauphiné," she replied, filling their cups. "Now, then, I'll tell you why I think Bourbon will be caught."

"Ay, tell us that," said the Constable, emptying his flagon.

"I think he will be taken, because he is rash, and exposes himself to needless risk," said the old woman, looking hard at Bourbon as she spoke. "He is beset with dangers on all sides. The roads are guarded, and there are soldiers in every town in Dauphiné on the look-out for him. Where is he to go?"

"If he reaches the mountains, he will be safe," said Bourbon.

"Ah! but he won't reach the mountains if he comes this way," remarked the hostess.

"Why not?—they are close at hand," asked Bourbon.

"Because the provost of Vienne, with a powerful guard, is in the neighbourhood, making active search for him," said the old woman, in a significant tone; "that is why I think he will be captured."

"She warns me of my danger," thought Bourbon.

"The provost is coming hither from Eclose," pursued the hostess. "I wouldn't advise Bourbon to take that road."

"I don't think it likely he will take it, my good dame," said the Constable. "Depend upon it, he will go in quite another direction."

"In which direction can he go?" said the hostess. "I tell you, there are soldiers on every road."

"But there is a cross-road to the mountains," remarked Hugues.

"True, if he could only find it," she rejoined.

"I know it," said Hugues. "Have you any horses, hostess?"

"I have, but I cannot spare them."

"You mean, you dare not let us have them."

"As you will. But you won't get horses in Saint-André, and I advise you not to stay longer than you can help in the neighbourhood."

"We will follow your counsel, good dame," said Pomperant, as he and Bourbon rose from the table, and prepared for immediate departure. "Thanks for our entertainment," he added, giving her a gold crown.

"This is too much," she said.

"Keep it, it will bring you luck," said the Constable. "If Bourbon comes back, show it to him."

"Ah! I dread his coming back!" she exclaimed.

"They say if Bourbon escapes, he will return at

the head of an army of English and Spaniards, and slaughter us all, like so many sheep."

"His enemies say that of him," rejoined the Constable. "Hear me. If Bourbon comes back, it will be to liberate the people from oppression, and bring them peace and happiness. He loves France better than the king loves it."

"In that case, I hope he may get away safely, and come back speedily," said the old woman.

"Amen!" cried Bourbon. "Heaven has already delivered him from many dangers, and will not desert him now! Farewell, good dame!"

"A good journey to you, messieurs," she rejoined. "Stay," she added to Hugues; "though I can't furnish you with horses, I can supply you with provisions, and you will need them in the mountains."

So saying, she hastily filled a basket with bread and cold meat, and did not neglect to add a couple of flasks of wine.

Armed with this supply, Hugues followed his leaders out of the house, and the party took their way along a rarely-trodden footpath towards the mountains.

They had not proceeded more than a league, when they found they were pursued by the provost of Vienne and his guard, and again sought shelter in a wood. Nor did they venture forth till night-fall, when they marched on vigorously, and reached the mountains without further interruption.

Nearly four days, marked by incessant toil and exposure to hardship, difficulties, and dangers of many kinds, elapsed before Bourbon and his companions reached Chambéry.

Often, in the course of the wearisome journey, they lost their way among the mountains, for they did not dare to employ a guide, and only when compelled by absolute necessity did they approach a chalet.

Nevertheless, through all this fatigue and danger,

Bourbon never lost heart—never for a moment doubted his ultimate escape. Both he and Pomperant had too often known a soldier's couch to heed sleeping amid the mountains with only the skies above them; and Hugues was not less hardy. Had it not been for the risk to which he was exposed, this kind of life would not have been without a charm to the fugitive prince. Magnificent scenery was presented to him. Mountains, sometimes bare and craggy, sometimes rounded and clothed with trees almost to their summit—while from these heights lovely views were obtained of broad and fertile valleys, watered by rapid streams, and peopled with villages—or a vast plain, spreading out for leagues, giving glimpses here and there of the rushing Rhône, and bounded in the distance by the snowy peaks of the Alps. Such were some of the prospects which cheered Bourbon during his detention amid the Jura mountains.

At last he approached Chambéry, but neither he nor Pomperant ventured into the town, but, tarrying in the environs, sent on Hugues to reconnoitre. Some time elapsed before their emissary returned. He had managed to replenish his basket with wine and provisions, but brought word that the town was full of soldiers, the Comte de Saint-Pol being there with a large force, on his way to Italy to join Bonnivet.

This intelligence caused Bourbon at once to abandon the design he had formed of crossing the Alps and proceeding to Genoa, and decided him, at whatever risk, to prosecute his original design, and make for the Franche-Comté. There was danger in the latter course, but far greater danger from Saint-Pol and his troops.

Without entering the town, Bourbon therefore turned aside from Chambéry, and took the way towards Aix. They walked for a couple of hours, when worn out almost by fatigue, they approached

a châlet, and obtained accommodation for the night. The account they gave of themselves satisfied the master of the châlet, and they left early next morning without exciting his suspicion. On reaching the Lac de Bourget, they hired a boat, and were rowed to the farther end of that beautiful lake.

Having reached Seyssel in safety, they crossed the Rhône, and sought shelter in a châlet for the night. Next morning they again began to ascend the Jura, and after crossing several peaks, and tracking more than one gloomy gorge, they came in sight of the ancient town of Nantua, seated on the borders of a lake. Not daring, however, to enter the town, they again sought the shelter of a châlet. A mountainous ridge now only separated them from the Franche-Comté. This ridge crossed, Bourbon's danger would be over.

At break of day the fugitives again started on their journey. It was a lovely morning, and the

beauty of the scenery might have tempted them to linger on their way; but they hurried on, eager to cross the frontier.

On attaining the summit of a mountain commanding the beautiful valley, in which lay the old town of Nantua and its lake, Bourbon paused for a moment to survey the lovely prospect, and then became aware that a small troop of cavalry was ascending the heights. Pointing out the danger to his companions they all three started off, and, after crossing the summit of the mountain, dashed down the opposite side. Near the foot of the acclivity there was a thick dark wood, and into this they plunged, though not unperceived by their pursuers, who by this time had gained the brow of the mountain.

At the sight, the soldiers dashed down the hill, a portion of the troop entering the wood, while the others rode round it. By this manoeuvre they hoped to secure their prey; but they were foiled.

Three of the men-at-arms, who had penetrated into the thicket, were suddenly set upon by Bourbon and his companions, and compelled to give up their horses. Being thus provided with steeds, the fugitives suddenly burst out of the wood and galloped towards the frontier, which was marked by the river Ain, now only half a league off.

On a mount on the farther side of the river stood a fort garrisoned by the soldiers of the Emperor, and it was towards this point that the fugitives now shaped their course. But they were hotly pursued by their enemies, while another small band of cavalry, sallying from a fort on the French side of the river, sought to cut off their retreat. Before the latter could come up, however, Bourbon and his companions had reached the river, and dashing into it without hesitation, swam their horses safely across.

When they landed on the opposite bank they were welcomed by a company of German reiters,

to whom the Constable immediately announced himself, and on learning his quality the men shook their lances, and set up a loud shout of "Vive Bourbon!"

XVIII.

SAINT-CLAUDE.

AT the Constable's request he was conducted by the reiters to the fort, where he was received with all the honour due to his rank by the governor, who congratulated him most heartily on his escape, and gave him the very satisfactory intelligence that all his adherents whom he had quitted at the Château d'Herment—including the Seigneurs Tansannes, Du Peloux, Espinat, and Desguières—together with Lurcy, had already succeeded in reaching the Franche-Comté.

"Your highness will find them at Saint-Claude, where they are anxiously awaiting your arrival," said the governor. "They are guests of Cardinal Labaume, Sovereign Bishop of Geneva, and are sojourning at the episcopal palace. Most of them arrived nearly a week ago, but the Seigneur Lurcy only crossed the frontier yesterday."

"I am rejoiced to learn that Lurcy has escaped," said Bourbon. "I have heard nothing of him, and feared he might have fallen into the hands of the king, who would have shown him no mercy."

"That is quite certain," replied the governor. "Your highness is no doubt aware that the Comte de Saint-Vallier, the Bishops of Autun and Puy, the Seigneurs Aimard de Prie, Pierre de Popillon, Chancellor of the Bourbonnois, Gilbert Baude-manche, and others of your partisans, have been arrested and lodged in the Conciergerie at Paris. It is said, but I know not with what truth, that

the Comte de Saint-Vallier has been tortured, to wring confession from him."

"Alas!" exclaimed Bourbon, "he is most unjustly dealt with. Of all my partisans, Saint-Vallier is the last who ought to be punished, for he endeavoured to dissuade me from my design, and yet it is on his devoted head that the tyrant seems bent on wreaking his direst vengeance. But a day of retribution is at hand. For every life sacrificed by François, I will have ten."

"I am sorry to mar your highness's satisfaction at a moment like the present," said the governor, "but I could not withhold this painful news from you."

"I thank you for giving it me, sir," rejoined Bourbon. "The information steels my breast. As I have just said, if I cannot deliver my friends, I can avenge them. But what of the ten thousand lanz-knechts that were to be raised for me by the Comtes Furstenberg?"

"On hearing of your highness's flight," returned the governor, "the Comtes Furstenberg marched with their men towards the west, to join the Anglo-Flemish army in Picardy. They took several castles by the way, but I fear they have encountered serious obstacles. The last tidings received of them were, that they were retreating to Neufchâteau on the Meuse, after heavy losses."

"Would I had been with them!" cried Bourbon. "But where are the four thousand Vaudois promised me?"

"They have returned to their own country, fearing they would get no pay," replied the governor.

"Then I have no army in the Franche-Comté?"

"Your highness will soon raise one. When your escape is known, thousands will flock round your standard."

With this assurance Bourbon was forced to be content. He tarried for a few hours at the fort

to rest and refresh himself, and during this time both he and Pomperant were enabled, by the governor's aid, to make some change in their habiliments, of which they stood greatly in need.

Thus newly equipped, and attended by Hugues, who had likewise obtained fresh habiliments, they started for Saint-Claude, accompanied by an escort of twenty reiters.

As he rode along, Bourbon could not help contrasting his present position with that in which he had been so lately placed. A few hours ago, he was environed by enemies, and in danger of his life. Now he was free, and would soon be able to requite the injuries he had sustained. His exultation was damped by the thought that so many of his partisans were in the king's hands, but this reflection only served to intensify his desire for vengeance.

On arriving at Saint-Claude, he repaired at once to the episcopal palace, and presenting himself to

Cardinal Labaume, received a cordial welcome from the prelate, who was a zealous partisan of the Emperor.

After listening with great interest to Bourbon's account of his flight, and the perils he had encountered, the Cardinal sent for Lurcy and the rest of the Constable's adherents, and was much touched by the meeting that took place between them and their fugitive lord.

Bourbon himself was profoundly affected on beholding his devoted friends, and embraced each individually.

"This rewards me for all my suffering," he said. "You must forgive me, my good friends, for quitting you. The step was absolutely necessary for the safety of us all. Had I not taken it, we might not be here now."

"Your highness's escape from so many perils is truly providential," observed Cardinal Labaume. "Thanks should be offered to the Great Power

who has so marvellously preserved you. Let us now repair to my chapel, where you can perform your devotions."

Though a stern soldier, Bourbon was devout, and religiously believing that the hand of Heaven had been manifested in his behalf, it was with unwonted fervour that he offered up his grateful prayers at the altar of the small chapel to which he was led by the cardinal.

XIX.

IN WHAT MANNER BOURBON ENTERED BESANÇON.

BOURBON remained for three days at Saint-Claude, the guest of Cardinal Labaume, by whom he was entertained with princely hospitality. On the fourth day, he departed for Besançon, accompanied by all his adherents, and attended by a numerous escort of reiters, furnished for him by the cardinal. Among his suite was Hugues, who was now enrolled in his service.

Harbingers had been sent on to announce Bourbon's visit to the ancient capital of the Franche-

Comté. Preparations, therefore, for his reception had been made by the municipal authorities, who, in order to please the Emperor and mortify the King of France, had determined to treat Bourbon as a sovereign prince.

The city of Besançon, which existed in the time of the Romans, and which has been described by Cæsar himself, was a place of great strength, built on a hill, almost surrounded by the river Doubs, which here takes the form of a horse-shoe. On a rocky height, the base of which was washed by the Doubs, stood the castle, originally built by the Romans; and in later times, when Besançon was annexed to France after the peace of Nimeguen, was converted into a citadel by Vauban. From its position, this castle looked impregnable, and capable of protecting the city, but it was besieged and taken by Louis XIV. in 1660. On a plain between two branches of the Doubs, where the Roman legions had once been encamped, and

which is still known as the *Campus Martius*, could be seen the tents of a small force of German lanz-knechts, reserved by the Emperor for the defence of the province.

On his arrival at Besançon, Bourbon was met at the foot of the old bridge across the Doubs by the burgomaster and all the civic authorities on horseback, and welcomed by them to the city. After listening to an address from the burgomaster, he was conducted across the bridge, which was lined by German lanz-knechts, into the city, amid the roar of ordnance, the braying of trumpets, the beating of drums, and the acclamations of the spectators. The picturesque old houses were decked with garlands of flowers, and hung with scrolls and banners, houses were decorated with carpets and rich stuffs, the fountains ran with wine, and the capital of the Franche-Comté had not been so festive since the time when the Emperor last visited it.

Bourbon was conducted by the burgomaster and the other magistrates to the cathedral of Saint-Jean, a noble Gothic pile, and as he dismounted at the porch, enthusiastic shouts were raised by the lanz-knechts crowding the enclosure—the interior of the sacred pile being so full that they could not obtain admittance. Thanksgivings were then offered for the deliverance of the fugitive prince from his enemies, and a *Te Deum* sung. At the close of these religious solemnities, Bourbon was taken to the Herrenhaus, where a grand banquet had been prepared.

All honours that could have been bestowed upon the Emperor himself was shown to the illustrious fugitive. A palatial mansion in the midst of the city, which Charles V. himself had occupied, was appropriated to him, and a numerous civic guard assigned him.

Notwithstanding this brilliant reception, Bourbon was greatly disheartened by the intelligence he

received of the proceedings of his royal allies. To his mortification he learnt that the Spanish forces had been successfully held in check at Bayonne by Lautrec, while the Duke of Suffolk, who had made a descent upon the coast of Picardy, and had advanced almost within sight of Paris, had been recalled by the King of England. Moreover, a large force had been placed by François upon the frontiers of Burgundy, under the joint command of the Duke d'Alençon and the Duke de Guise, while the king himself still remained at Lyons with the army.

Bourbon had now been more than a fortnight at Besançon, burning with impatience to avenge his injuries, when despatches arrived from Spain and England. Both monarchs attributed the failure of the design to him. Had he performed his promises, the joint invasion must have been successful. But when he fled, Henry recalled his forces, and the Emperor suspended the siege of Bayonne. The King of England refused the supplies of money and

artillery which Bourbon had urgently demanded of him, and the Emperor professed himself unable to send him either money or succour. Both declared that the project must be for the present abandoned.

Bourbon's hopes of immediate revenge being thus at an end, he resolved to proceed without delay to Spain, in order to hold a personal interview with the Emperor, and, if possible, plan a campaign for the winter.

His design was to pass into Italy by way of Germany, Switzerland being then allied to France, and he proposed in the first instance to visit his cousin the Duke of Mantua. From Mantua he would proceed to Genoa, and thence embark for Spain.

While he was making preparations for his meditated journey, he was informed, one morning, that the Seigneur d'Imbaut, a gentleman belonging to the household of the King of France, furnished

with a *sauf conduit*, had arrived at Besançon, and sought a private audience of him.

Bourbon refused a private audience, but consented to receive the envoy in the presence of his adherents. Accordingly, D'Imbaut was ushered into a great hall half filled with the civic guard, armed with halberds. At the upper end of the hall, on a chair of state, sat Bourbon, surrounded by his partisans.

After making a profound obeisance, the envoy said:

“I am the bearer of a message from my royal master the King of France. I am sent to offer to your highness a full and complete pardon for all your offences committed against his majesty and against the state, if you will engage to merit clemency by sincere repentance, and unshaken fidelity for the future.”

Here D'Imbaut paused, but Bourbon making no reply, he went on:

"As an incitement to your highness to return to your duty, the king my master graciously offers you the immediate restitution of the whole of your possessions, which will otherwise be confiscated, the re-establishment of all the pensions of which you have been deprived, with full assurance that they shall hereafter be paid with exactitude." He then paused for a moment, and added, "What answer shall I take from your highness to his majesty?"

"Tell the king your master," rejoined Bourbon, sternly and haughtily, "that I have thrown off my allegiance to him, and consequently he has no power to pardon me. Tell him that he has already played me false, and that I would not trust his promise to restore me my possessions, or to continue my pensions. Tell him to confiscate my domains if he likes—I will soon have them back again."

"I will repeat word for word what your highness has told me," replied the envoy.

"You may depart, then," said Bourbon.

"I have not yet done," said D'Imbaut, assuming a different and more haughty manner; "since your highness has declared that you have thrown off your allegiance, I must, in the name of the king my master, demand your sword as Constable of France."

Bourbon's eyes blazed with anger at this demand, but he constrained himself.

"The king your master took that sword from me at Fontainebleau," he said. "But I have another sword, which he shall have—when he can take it."

"I have my answer," said D'Imbaut.

Then looking round at the group of gentlemen, he asked:

"Messeigneurs, do you all remain obstinate in rebellion? I am enabled to offer you the king's grace. Will none of you accept it?"

"None," they replied, with one voice.

"A moment, sir," said Bourbon to the envoy.
"Tell the king your master, from me, his enemy,
that when next we meet we shall have changed
places. It will be for him to sue for pardon."

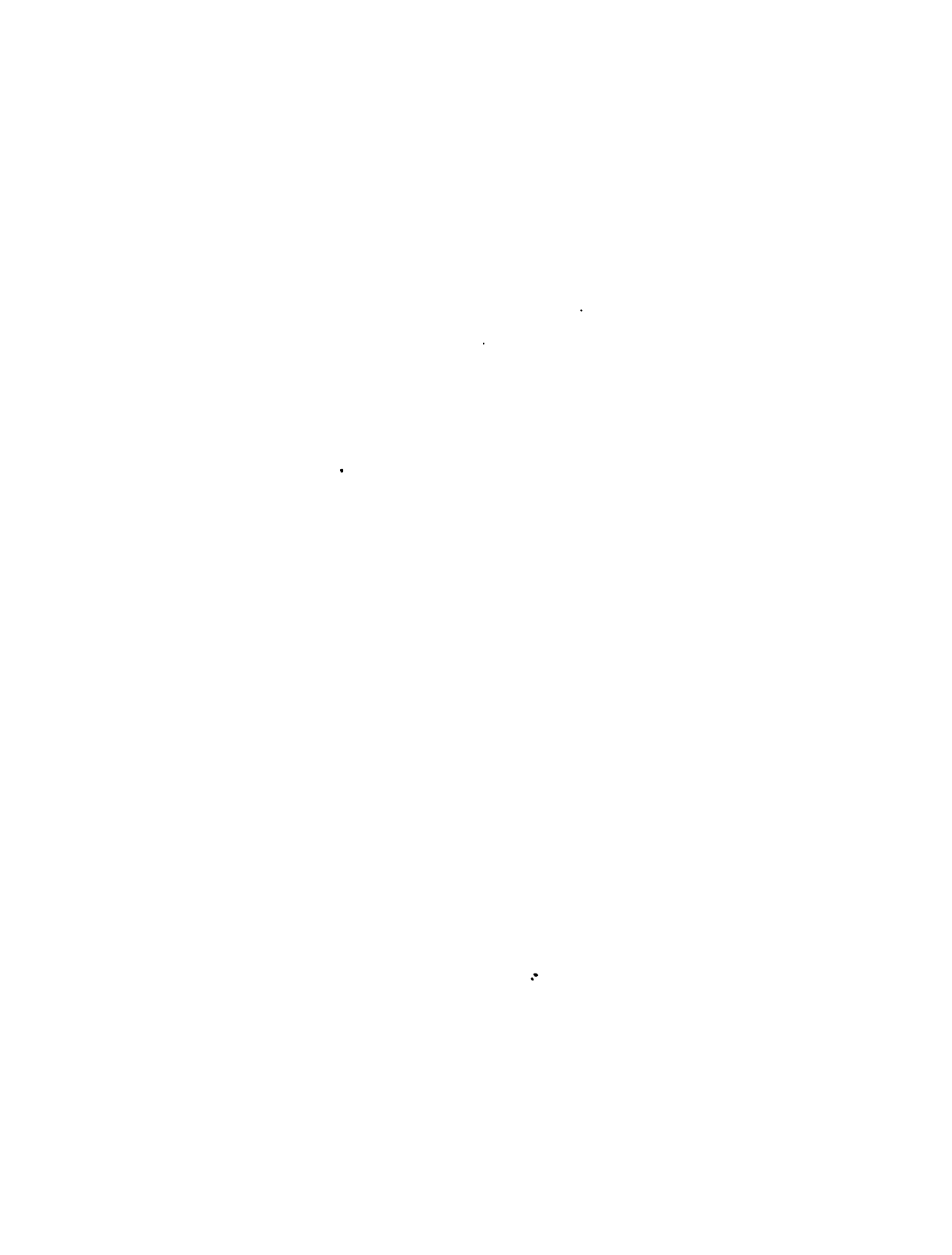
Charged with this defiant message, D'Imbaut
departed.

End of the Second Book.

BOOK III.



THE CHEVALIER BAYARD.



I.

HOW THE COMTE DE SAINT-VALLIER'S PARDON WAS OBTAINED.

ON learning that his offer had been scornfully rejected by Bourbon, as related in the preceding chapter, François I. at once ordered the Chancellor Duprat to confiscate the whole of the fugitive's possessions, to degrade him from his rank, and declare his name infamous; to efface his armorial bearings, and his sword as Constable from all his châteaux; to demolish in part his magnificent hôtel in Paris, and strew the ground with salt; and to cause the public executioner to sully with

yellow ochre such portion of the building as should be left standing, in order that it might remain as a memento of the duke's treason.

Thus did the infuriated king wreak his vengeance upon the enemy who was beyond his grasp. For a time, François remained at Lyons, fearing that Bourbon might raise an army in the Franche-Comté and march into France, and entirely abandoning his design of proceeding to Italy, began to adopt vigorous measures for the defence of his own kingdom. He despatched the Duc de Vendôme and Chabot to Paris to watch over the defence of the capital, and ordered the grand seneschal of Normandy, De Brézé, to raise six thousand men in that province. His apprehensions, however, were relieved by the retirement of the English army, and by the withdrawal of the Emperor's forces from before Bayonne.

Tired at last of his sojourn at Lyons, yet indisposed to return to Paris, François proceeded to

Blois, and in the magnificent château, which he had partially rebuilt in the style of the Renaissance, sought to banish his cares by abandoning himself to pleasurable enjoyment; passing his days in the chase, and his nights in festivity. Amidst all his distractions, he could not banish from his breast the image of the fair Diane de Poitiers. The violent passion he had conceived for her still possessed him, though months had flown by since he had seen her.

The king was at Blois when a messenger arrived from the chief president of the Parliament, De Selve, to acquaint his majesty with the judgment pronounced upon the principal personages connected with Bourbon's conspiracy.

"First in regard to the nineteen accomplices of Charles de Bourbon, who have followed their rebellious lord in his flight from the kingdom," said the messenger. "These contumacious rebels are all condemned to death, and, if taken, that sentence

will be immediately carried into effect upon them. In the case of Lurcy, whose guilt is held to be greater than that of the others, the sentence is that his head shall be exposed on the bridge over the Rhône at Lyons."

"Pass on from the fugitives to the traitors who are in our power," said the king. "How have they been dealt with?—with due severity, I trust."

"The Bishop of Puy has been liberated, sire," replied the messenger, "but the Bishop of Autun is to be deprived of his possessions, and detained a prisoner during your majesty's pleasure."

"Why should more clemency be shown to one prelate than to the other?" said François. "Both are equally guilty, methinks! Proceed."

"Desguières and Bertrand Simon are condemned to make amende honorable, and to be imprisoned for three years in any castle your majesty may appoint," said the messenger. "D'Escars is adjudged to the torture; Gilbert de Baudemanche is sen-

tenced to a brief imprisonment; and Sainte-Bonnet is acquitted."

"And what of Saint-Vallier?" demanded the king.

"Sire, he is to be deprived of his possessions, to be degraded from his rank, to be put to the torture, and afterwards beheaded at the Place de Grève."

"A just and proper sentence," remarked François. "All the others should have been 'served in like manner."

"It rests with your majesty to appoint the day for Saint-Vallier's execution," said the messenger.

"I will think of it," replied François. And the messenger quitted the presence.

Shortly afterwards, another messenger arrived, bringing a letter from the Duchesse d'Angoulême to the king, her son, in which she urged him not to show any clemency to Saint-Vallier. "Be firm on this point," she wrote. "Too much leniency has been shown towards the conspirators by the

Parliament, and if a severe example be not made of some of them, it will be an incitement to rebellion. Strong efforts, I know, will be made to induce you to pardon Saint-Vallier, but do not yield to the solicitations. The Chancellor Duprat concurs with me in opinion."

"Shall I take back an answer from your majesty?" said the messenger.

"Say to her highness that I will attend to her counsel," replied the king, dismissing the messenger.

Somewhat later in the day, while the king was still in his chamber, he was informed by an usher that the Comtesse de Maulévrier had just arrived at the château, and besought an immediate interview with him.

François at once granted the request, and Diane de Poitiers was ushered into his presence. Her lovely features bore traces of profound affliction. At a sign from the king, the usher immediately withdrew, and left them alone.

"You will readily divine my errand, sire," cried Diane, throwing herself on her knees before him, in spite of his efforts to prevent her. "You know that my unfortunate father has been condemned by the Parliament to torture and to death by the headsman's hand. Have compassion on him, sire—spare him—for my sake!"

"Rise, Diane, and listen to me," said François. "My heart prompts me to yield to your solicitations, but, were I to do so, my clemency would be misconstrued. The Comte de Saint-Vallier having been found guilty of lèse-majesté and rebellion by the solemn tribunal at which he has been placed, I am compelled to confirm the sentence passed upon him. Bourbon's revolt has steeled my breast to pity. Your father was the traitor's chief friend and counsellor."

"As such, sire, he strove to dissuade the duke from his design," she cried.

"The Parliament can have had no proof of that beyond your father's affirmation," said the king.

"On the contrary, they believe him to be deeper dyed in treason than the rest of the conspirators."

"My father's judges have been unjust, sire," she rejoined; "but I see it is in vain to convince you of his innocence. You are determined to wreak your vengeance upon him, in order that the blow may be felt by Bourbon. The answer you have given me is little in accordance with your former language."

"You ask what I cannot grant, Diane. Why torture me thus?"

"I will torture you no more. Adieu, sire! I quit your presence never to re-enter it."

"Stay, Diane," he cried, detaining her. "I cannot part with you thus. You know how passionately I love you."

"I find it impossible to reconcile your professions with your conduct, sire. As for myself, if I have ever felt love for you, I will tear it from my heart."

"Then you confess that you have loved me, Diane? You never owned as much before. Nay, to speak truth, I fancied from the coldness of your manner that you were insensible to my passion."

"It matters little now what my feelings have been towards you, sire," she rejoined. "But if it will pain you to know the truth, I will not hide it. I *did* love you—love you passionately. But I hate you now—ay, hate you as a tyrant."

"No, no, you do not, cannot hate me," he cried. "It is impossible to resist your influence. You have conquered. I yield," he added, kneeling to her. "Say that you love me still, and I will grant your request."

"Your majesty has already extorted the avowal from me," she rejoined. "I thought you had crushed the feeling, but I find it still survives. Promise me my father's life, and all the love my heart has to bestow shall be yours."

"I do promise it," he replied, clasping her in his

arms. "The Comte de Saint-Vallier ought to rejoice that he has so powerful an advocate. None but yourself could have saved him. I had fully determined on his death."

"Mistake not my father, sire," she rejoined. "He would not accept pardon from you if he knew how it was purchased. Dread of dishonour made him join with Bourbon."

"Think no more of that," said François, passionately. "I care not to inquire into his motives for rebellion, since I design to pardon him. But I account it worse than treason that he should forbid you to love me."

"Enough of this, sire. I must crave leave to depart. I shall never feel easy till I know that my father is safe. Let me return to Paris with his pardon."

"A messenger is here from the first president," replied François. "He shall take back the warrant."

"I can trust it to no custody but my own," said Diane. "You will not refuse me this, sire?"

"I have said that I can refuse you nothing, sweet Diane," he rejoined. "But you will come back soon?"

"As soon as I have set my father free," she rejoined.

"Stay, Diane. I must not deceive you," said François, somewhat gravely. "I cannot order your father's immediate liberation. He must remain a prisoner for a time."

"You will not belie your royal word, sire?" she cried. "You do not mean to play me false?"

"I *will* liberate the Comte de Saint-Vallier ere long, and bestow a full pardon on him—foi de gentilhomme!" said the king. "For the present, I can merely commute his sentence into imprisonment. But that is tantamount to pardon."

"Since your majesty gives me that assurance, I

am content," said Diane. "But let me have the warrant."

François at once sat down at a table, and tracing a few lines on a sheet of paper, signed the despatch, and gave it to her. "This letter to the Chancellor Duprat will accomplish all you desire," he said. "Your father is in no danger of torture or the headsman's axe. He will be sent to the Château de Loches. But he will soon be liberated. Are you content?"

"I must be, sire," said Diane, as she took the letter. "I shall fly with the missive to Paris."

"Return as quickly as you can," said François. "Were it possible, you should bring the Comte de Saint-Vallier with you."

"He would rather remain in his dungeon than accompany me," she rejoined. "Adieu, sire."

And, quitting the cabinet, she entered her litter, and proceeded towards Paris.

II.

HOW BOURBON WAS APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND OF THE
IMPERIAL ARMY.

ACCOMPANIED by all his partisans, and attended by a strong escort of reiters, the Duke de Bourbon set out from Besançon for Italy. Shaping his course through Germany, and eventually reaching Coire, he crossed the Alps by the Splugen, which at that time was a difficult and dangerous proceeding, and passing through Bergamo and Brescia, succeeded in reaching Mantua in safety. Here he was cordially welcomed by his cousin, Federico

Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua—a prince of great ability, and a staunch partisan of the Emperor, by whom he was subsequently raised to a ducal dignity. Gonzaga was a great patron of arts and letters, and his court was the resort of painters, sculptors, and men of learning and science.

Bourbon and his suite were lodged in the vast Castello di Corte, and several grand entertainments were given in his honour at this palace, and at the magnificent Palazzo del Te. The illustrious fugitive's safe arrival at Mantua was made the occasion of general rejoicings in the city; a tournament was held in the Piazza della Fiera, and a solemn procession was made by Gonzaga and his whole court to the Duomo, where thanksgivings were offered for the duke's deliverance.

Gonzaga did not confine himself to a mere display of hospitality towards his noble kinsman, but voluntarily proffered him all the assistance in his power. Of money Bourbon was not in immediate

need, since the whole of the treasure which he had confided to his adherents, after quitting them at the Château d'Herment, had been restored to him, and he hoped to be able to obtain supplies from the Emperor for the payment of such forces as he might raise. Having the utmost reliance on the judgment of Gonzaga, Bourbon explained all his plans to him, mentioning that the Emperor had promised him the hand of his sister Leonor, the widowed Queen of Portugal.

"I counsel you not to claim fulfilment of that promise," said Gonzaga. "Most assuredly the Emperor will find a pretext to evade its performance. When the offer was made, you were the most powerful noble in France, and able, it was supposed, to raise all the central provinces in revolt. But your design has been thwarted by the prudent conduct of the king, who, by remaining at Lyons with his army, and, overawing your vassals, has prevented the insurrection, and compelled you to

seek safety in flight. Having thus failed to accomplish your part of the compact, and thereby caused the Emperor's plans to miscarry, you cannot expect him to perform his part of the treaty. You are not now in the same position as heretofore."

"I am still Bourbon, and have still a sword," rejoined the duke, proudly. "I have now only twenty men at my back, but I will soon have twenty thousand."

"I nothing doubt it, cousin," replied Gonzaga. "You will soon regain the position you have lost. But do not go to Spain. Send Lurey to the Emperor. Ask for the command of a battalion in the Imperial army now opposed to the French in the Milanese, and the request will certainly be granted. An immediate opportunity of distinction will then be afforded you. You will share the command with generals of the highest repute—with Sforza, Duke of Milan—with the valiant Marquis de Pescara—with the skilful Antonio de

Leyva—with Lannoy, the Viceroy of Naples—and Giovanni de' Medici. Drive the French from Italy, secure the Milanese to Spain, and you will have earned the Emperor's gratitude. The utmost of your ambitious hopes may then be realised. The Queen of Portugal may become your consort—and a portion of France may be allotted to you as a kingdom."

Bourbon at once acted upon Gonzaga's advice, and despatched Lurcy with a letter to Charles V., in which he made no allusion to his Imperial Majesty's promises, but simply asked for a command in the confederate army.

Charged with this despatch, Lurcy proceeded to Genoa, where he embarked for Barcelona, and thence made his way to Madrid.

While awaiting the Emperor's response, Bourbon was condemned to a month's inaction—a sore trial to his patience. At last, Lurcy returned, accompanied by the Comte de Beaurain. Desirous that

Gonzaga should hear the Emperor's answer, Bourbon received Beaurain in the presence of the marquis.

"What answer do you bring me from his Imperial Majesty?" he demanded of the envoy.

"This, my lord," replied Beaurain, delivering a warrant. "My master the Emperor has appointed your highness lieutenant-general of his army in Italy, and representative of his person. As such, you will be supreme in command—even above the Viceroy of Naples."

With a look of satisfaction, Bourbon turned to Gonzaga, and said:

"I will soon lower Bonnivet's pride, and drive his army across the Alps. That done, the conquest of France itself will speedily follow."

III.

THE TWO ARMIES IN THE MILANESE.

BEFORE proceeding further, it will be necessary to describe the position of the two opposing armies in the Milanese, and to consider their relative strength.

Entrusted by his royal master with supreme command, and persuaded that he could recover the Milanese, which had been lost by Lautrec, the rash and presumptuous Bonnivet descended into the plains of Lombardy at the head of a large army, comprising about forty thousand men, more than

half of whom were drawn from the Swiss cantons, Lorraine and Guelders, and some of the smaller Italian states.

Associated with Bonnivet were several brave and experienced leaders, some of them far more fitted for command than himself—namely, the valiant Maréchal de Montmorency, the heroic Chevalier Bayard, Jean de Chabannes, Seigneur de Vandenesse, the Comte de Saint-Pol, the Vidame de Chartres, Annebaut, De Lorges, Beauvais, Jean de Diesbach, a Swiss leader of distinction, and two Italian nobles, Federico da Bozzolo and Renzo da Ceri.

On entering the Milanese, Bonnivet encountered little opposition, and possessed himself without difficulty of a large portion of the duchy. The veteran Prospero Colonna, who then commanded the Imperial army, after ineffectually disputing the French general's passage across the Ticino, withdrew to Lodi, while Antonio de Leyva threw him-

self with three thousand men into Pavia, and at once prepared for the defence of that city.

Had Bonnivet marched direct upon Milan, in all probability the place would have succumbed, for though the Duke Francisco Sforza possessed a garrison of fifteen thousand infantry, eight hundred lances, and as many light horse, the city was not in a state of defence, the walls which had been partially demolished by Lautrec not having been rebuilt. It soon became evident, however, that a blockade merely was intended by the French commander; whereupon active preparations for the defence of the city were made by Morone, the Duke of Milan's chancellor. The walls were repaired, and the garrison quickly and effectually provisioned.

Meantime, Bonnivet, seizing upon Monza, began to lay waste the country, destroyed the mills, and cut off the canals that supplied Milan with water. He then fixed his camp at Abbiate-Grasso, in

which position he could intercept all communications from the south. On the west he was master of the course of the Ticino to Vigevano, and on the north, as we have said, he held Monza. Thus placed, he felt confident of reducing Milan by famine. Besides the capital of Lombardy, only one important city now remained in possession of the Imperialists—namely, Pavia—but its strength and situation rendered it capable of standing a lengthened siege.

As to Milan itself, which was now occupied by Prospero Colonna and Francisco Sforza, it had been put, by the exertions of Morone, into such a state of defence, that it was impossible to take it by assault.

In the midst of these operations, Pope Adrian VI. died, and was succeeded on the Pontifical throne, after a long and severe struggle, by Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, who on his election assumed the name of Clement VII.

In the new Pope the French expected to find an enemy, while the Emperor calculated upon his friendship; but the secret desire of Clement VII., a prelate of great judgment and experience, was to remain neutral, and he proposed that a truce should be agreed upon, during which he might be able to mediate between the conflicting powers. The proposition, however, was indignantly rejected on either side, while the want of zeal in the Pope excited the anger of the Emperor. To appease him, Clement VII. secretly gave twenty thousand ducats to his ambassador, and compelled the Florentines to furnish a like sum.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Milan began to suffer from famine, for although there was plenty of corn in the city, it could not be ground, the mills having been destroyed. During eight days, more than a hundred thousand persons wanted bread, and the city was reduced to the greatest straits, when at last Monza was evacuated by Bonnivet,

and provisions were obtained from Bergamo and the Venetian states.

Things were in this posture when the octogenarian general, Prospero Colonna, whose health had been for some time failing, breathed his last. In Colonna the confederates lost a most sagacious and experienced leader, who perfectly understood the art of war. Taking Fabius as his model, he would never fight a battle if it could be avoided, and it was one of his maxims, that "the glory of a general suffers more from rashness than it gains from the *éclat* of victory."

Charles de Lannoy, who succeeded Prospero Colonna as commander of the confederate forces, was a man of middle age, and distinguished not merely for military skill and bravery, but for profound judgment. His early reputation had been won under the Emperor Maximilian, and his high qualities recommended him to Charles V., by whom

he was made governor of Tournay, and subsequently viceroy of Naples.

On quitting Naples to assume the command of the Imperial army, Lannoy was accompanied by the Marquis de Pescara, one of the Emperor's most distinguished generals, respecting whom we must say a few words.

Descended from the illustrious house of Avalos of Toledo, Pescara inherited all the pride and arrogance of his ancestors. Though still young, for at the period of which we treat he was only thirty-four, he had passed a long life in arms. He was taken prisoner by the French at the battle of Ravenna, and on his release returned to the army, and was again worsted at Vicenza, but covered himself with glory by driving Lautrec from Milan in 1521—only two years before our history. This achievement won him the greater renown, since the cautious Prospero Colonna declined to attempt the

enterprise. In the succeeding campaign the valiant Spanish leader distinguished himself by several brilliant feats of arms. He succoured Pavia when besieged by the French—helped to win the battle of Bicocca—took Lodi and Pizzighettone—and compelled Lescun to surrender Cremona. He subsequently besieged and took Genoa, delivering the city to pillage. These exploits caused him to be regarded as one of the great captains of the age. Fearless, energetic, rash, Pescara derided danger, and would undertake any enterprise, however hazardous. His constant disagreements, however, with Colonna rendered his position in the confederate army unsupportable, and he resigned his command and withdrew to Naples, where he remained till Lannoy was called upon to fill Colonna's post. In obedience to the Emperor's orders, Pescara then returned to Milan to resume his command of the Spanish forces, his place having been temporarily filled by Captain Alarcon.

The haughty marquis was perfectly content to serve under Lannoy; but when he heard of Bourbon's appointment as lieutenant-general of the confederate army, and representative of the Emperor, his jealousy was immediately excited.

Another Spanish general of distinction, of whom we shall have occasion hereafter more fully to speak, was Don Antonio de Leyva. At this juncture he occupied Pavia with a force of six thousand infantry and a thousand horse, and had so strongly fortified the city that he conceived it impregnable. De Leyva had risen to his present eminence after a long and brilliant career.

The command of the Italian division, which consisted of Lombards, Florentines, Romans, Modenese, Lucchese, and Neapolitan soldiers, was entrusted to Francisco Sforza, Duke of Milan. Associated with Sforza was the Duke of Urbino, general of the Venetian forces, who had recently joined the confederates.

IV.

HOW THE DUKE DE BOURBON ENTERED MILAN.

IMMEDIATELY on receiving the appointment from the Emperor, Bourbon set out from Mantua to assume the command of the Imperial army. All his suite went with him, and he was accompanied by Gonzaga with a guard of six hundred lances. Tidings of his approach to Milan having preceded him, Francisco Sforza, magnificently accoutred, and attended by a glittering train of three hundred knights, all superbly arrayed, came forth from the gates of the city to meet him. The Duke

of Milan was accompanied by his chancellor, Geronimo Morone, who was robed in black velvet, and wore a massive gold chain over his shoulders. Morone was a man of middle age, of grave aspect, and dignified demeanour.

Armed from head to foot in polished steel, and bestriding a powerful black charger, which was sumptuously caparisoned in housings of crimson velvet embroidered with his arms, and having a chanfrin of snowy plumes at its head, Bourbon presented a splendid appearance. All his suite were richly accoutred, and well mounted. Nothing could be more cordial than the greeting that passed between Sforza and Bourbon, and after an exchange of courtesies, they rode side by side into Milan, followed by Morone and Gonzaga.

As the cavalcade approached the gates, Bourbon examined the newly repaired walls and bastions, and cast a glance of approval at Morone. Bourbon himself, after the battle of Marignano, had been

governor of Milan, and if his rule over the conquered city had been necessarily severe, he had not, like his successor, the Maréchal de Lautrec, rendered himself personally obnoxious to the citizens. But if any feelings of animosity had formerly existed towards him, they were now forgotten, and he was greeted with smiles and the waving of scarves and kerchiefs from the fair occupants of windows and balconies, and by loud acclamations from the populace thronging the streets as he rode along.

Owing to the crowd and some stoppages, the progress of the cavalcade was somewhat slow, but at last, emerging from a long narrow street, it issued into a broad piazza, and the stately Duomo—the pride of Milan—burst upon them. Often as Bourbon had gazed upon this glorious Gothic fane—often as he had studied its marvellous architectural beauties—it had lost none of its effect upon him, but excited his admiration as powerfully as

ever. But he had little time to gaze upon it. The piazza in front of the fane was entirely filled with soldiers, and as the cavalcade crossed it, the place resounded with shouts of "Viva Bourbon!"

Amid such enthusiastic demonstrations, Sforza and those with him proceeded to the ducal palace, and on entering the court, which was half filled with mounted Spanish soldiers, they found three knightly personages, all fully accoutred and on horseback, waiting to receive them. These were Lannoy, Viceroy of Naples, the Marquis de Pescara, and Giovanni de' Medici. From his gorgeous armour and the rich trappings of his charger, Lannoy made a very imposing appearance. He was powerfully built, stern of aspect, and stately in manner, and his looks bespoke wisdom and resolution.

Very different in appearance, but equally martial in aspect, was the haughty Spanish general, Pescara. Possessing a light, active, well-knit frame, he

seemed capable of enduring any amount of fatigue, and of executing any enterprise that his daring spirit might conceive. His features were regular and handsome, and the scars on his cheek and brow did not detract from his good looks while communicating a certain grimness to his aspect. His complexion was swarthy, and his beard, which he wore pointed in the Spanish fashion, coal-black. His expression was fierce, and his deportment proud and overbearing. When angry, his dark eyes seemed literally to blaze. Over his lacquered accoutrements he wore a surcoat on which his arms were blazoned, and was mounted on a fiery Andalusian barb, which had borne him through many a fray, and like himself had been often wounded. What with his striking physiognomy, his proud martial deportment, his splendid accoutrements, and his fiery barb, Pescara looked the beau ideal of a warrior.

Younger and handsomer than the redoubted

Spanish general was the gallant Giovanni de' Medici, who promised to become one of the most distinguished captains of the age. Like Pescara, Medici was active and enterprising, and was checked by no difficulty; as shrewd in devising a stratagem as resolute in carrying it out. His features were classical in outline, and lighted up large soft blue eyes, which gave little indication of the latent fierceness of his nature. His figure was tall and admirably proportioned, and his deportment commanding. Like the others, he was splendidly arrayed, and his charger richly barded.

As Bourbon entered the court-yard with the Duke of Milan, the three leaders just described advanced to meet him, and saluted him. After an exchange of courteous speeches, the whole party alighted, and entering the palace, were conducted by Sforza to a grand banqueting-chamber, where a sumptuous repast awaited them. Their discourse during the banquet turned chiefly upon certain

movements which had just been made by Bonnivet, and in reply to an inquiry from Bourbon, Pescara mentioned that the French general had placed his advanced guard at Robecco, a small town between Pavia and Lodi. "He has done this," continued Pescara, "to intercept our convoys. I have a plan which, if it meets your highness's approval, I will execute to-night. Before detailing it, I must explain that Robecco is a mere village, without defence of any kind, and is at least a league from the head-quarters of the French army. The vanguard consists of only two hundred horsemen, and the like number of foot soldiers. But it is commanded by Bayard."

"Then it is in charge of the best captain of the French forces," remarked Bourbon. "Bonnivet must be mad to place Bayard in such an exposed position."

"Perhaps he wishes him to incur a defeat," said Pescara, with a laugh. "If so, his malice will be

gratified, for I mean to surprise the post to-night. Had it been held by any other than the invincible chevalier, I should have sent Alarcon; but, as Bayard is there, I shall go myself."

"I approve of the plan, marquis," said Bourbon. "But let me give you a piece of counsel. Make your men wear their shirts over their accoutrements, in order that you may recognise them in the darkness."

"A good suggestion," said Pescara. "I will act upon it."

Later on in the day, a council was held by the leaders, during which various plans were discussed. When the assemblage broke up, Bourbon retired to the apartments which had been prepared for himself and his suite in the palace.

Next morning betimes he prepared to start for the camp. His escort was drawn up in the courtyard of the palace, and he was coming forth to mount his charger, when loud shouts were heard

outside the gates, and in another moment, Pescara, followed by a band of horse soldiers, laden with baggage and other spoils of war, rode into the court.

The accoutrements of the Spanish general and those of his men showed they had been engaged in a desperate fray. Their horses were covered with dust and blood, and scarcely able to stand—the only one amongst them that did not look thoroughly exhausted was the general's barb. Springing from the saddle, the indefatigable Pescara marched towards Bourbon, and bade him good day.

“What! back already, marquis?” cried Bourbon. “By my faith! you have displayed extraordinary activity. Why, Robecco must be some seven leagues from Milan. I perceive you have succeeded in your nocturnal expedition, and have brought back plenty of spoil. I pray you give me some particulars of the enterprise.”

“Willingly,” replied Pescara, smiling. “I care

not ordinarily to talk of my own feats, but I am proud of this achievement, since I have defeated the hitherto invincible Bayard. And now for the affair. At the head of three hundred picked men, scarce half of whom I have brought back, I left Milan an hour before midnight, and by two o'clock was close upon Robecco, which, as your highness has just remarked, is about seven leagues distant. All was still within the little camp and in the village adjoining, and as we listened we could hear the cocks crowing, heralding the approach of dawn. It was very dark, but my men, as your highness had recommended, wore their shirts above their accoutrements. After a brief halt, we moved as silently as we could towards the camp; but, cautious as was our approach, it was detected by the guard, who at once gave the alarm. On this, we dashed into the camp and seized upon the baggage. While we were thus employed, the trumpets sounded, and our foemen sprang to arms,

and mounted their horses. But, ere this could be accomplished, we had committed great havoc among them, and had secured the baggage, which, as your highness perceives, we have brought off."

"Where was Bayard all this while?" demanded Bourbon.

"Ill and in his tent when we came up, as I subsequently learnt from a captive," returned Pescara, "but ere many minutes he was on horseback, and rallying his men. He shouted to De Lorges, who was with him, to get the infantry together and retire with them to Abbiate-Grasso, and he protected their retreat with his lances. Thrice did I charge him—and each time with a considerable loss; but I so thinned his ranks, that he was compelled to follow the infantry. Knowing that assistance would soon arrive, and that I should be overpowered by numbers, I then gave the word to return. Bonnivet chased us for a couple of leagues, when, finding pursuit in vain, he turned back. I

have lost more than a hundred brave fellows in the expedition—but what of that? I have vanquished Bayard.”

“Bravo!” exclaimed Bourbon. “You may well be proud of the achievement, marquis. Bayard will never forgive Bonnivet for the defeat.”

“Never,” replied Pescara. “Alarcon, my captain, heard him say to De Lorges that in due time and place he would compel the Admiral to render him an account for the disgrace he had put upon him.”

Bourbon then took leave of Pescara, and, mounting his charger, rode out of the city, and put himself at the head of six thousand lanz-knechts and five hundred lances, who were drawn up outside the Porta Ticinese. With this force he proceeded to join the Imperial army, which was encamped near Gambolo, a small town about three leagues distant from the right bank of the Ticino.

V.

THE CONTESSA DI CHERI.

ONE night, about a week before Bourbon's entrance into Milan, a lady, young and of surpassing loveliness, was seated alone in the principal saloon of a magnificent palace in the Corso Romano. Her looks and rich attire proclaimed that she belonged to the highest rank. The saloon was sumptuously furnished, and adorned with paintings and sculpture, but it was imperfectly illumined by a couple of tapers placed on the table near which the lady sat. She was the Contessa di Chieri, one of the

loveliest women in Italy, and had been married long enough to care little for the count her husband, who lived apart from her at Rome.

After a while, the beautiful countess arose, and, walking to the open casement, stepped out upon a balcony overlooking the Corso, and, leaning upon the cushioned balustrade, gazed around. From this place could be seen the marble roof of the Duomo, rising like a snowy mountain above the tops of the adjoining houses. But no object in particular engaged her fancy. It was pleasant to look forth on such a night and breathe the soft and balmy air. Therefore she lingered for some time on the balcony, and did not think of returning to the saloon.

When the Contessa di Chieri first came out, bands of soldiers were traversing the Corso, but the place was now almost deserted. As the night advanced, its beauty seemed to increase, and the perfect stillness added to the charm. She was

gazing at the heavens, trying to penetrate their mysterious depths, when all at once a slight sound recalled her to earth, and, looking down, she beheld a tall cavalier wrapped in a long mantle. At this sight she would instantly have retreated, when her own name, pronounced in accents that were familiar to her, and that made the blood rush to her heart, arrested her.

"'Tis I, Beata!" cried the cavalier.

"Santa Maria! is it possible?—you here!"

"Hush! not so loud," rejoined the cavalier, "or yonder patrol will overhear us. Since you recognise me, you will not keep me here."

"You shall be admitted instantly," replied the countess. And she disappeared from the balcony.

The cavalier had not to wait long. The gates opening upon the cortile of the palace were closed, but a wicket was presently opened, and a female attendant, without saying a word to the cavalier, led him up a grand marble staircase to the saloon

where the countess awaited him. As soon as the attendant had retired, the cavalier threw off his cloak and hat, and disclosed the noble features and superb person of Bonnivet.

“Ah, what risk you have run to come here!” exclaimed the countess. “I tremble to think of it. If you should be discovered——”

“Reassure yourself, dear Beata, I shall not be discovered,” replied Bonnivet, passionately. “Oh, let me gaze at you! Let me satisfy myself that I behold you once more. By Heaven!” he exclaimed, yet more passionately, and pressing her to his bosom, “you look lovelier than ever. Oh, Beata, I would have laid siege to Milan to procure the happiness of this interview. But fortune has been against me, and has baffled all my efforts.”

“And you have quitted the camp to come here?” said the countess. “You have risked more than life in doing so.”

“But I am now fully repaid,” he rejoined.

"You would persuade me that you love me deeply," she said.

"Have I not proved my devotion by this act?" he rejoined. "Lovers, they say, are mad, and those who understand not what love is, and have never felt its pains, would deem me mad. Impelled by this madness, or passion—call it what you please—I have left my army to the care of the Comte de Saint-Pol, and have ventured among my enemies. But he who dares much will be rewarded, as I am."

"How did you contrive to enter the city?" demanded Beata. "I marvel how you could elude the vigilance of the guard."

"I have a safe-conduct from Giovanni de' Medici," replied Bonnivet. "I came hither as Galeazzo Visconti."

"But your return will be attended with even greater risk," said Beata. "If you should be captured, I shall never forgive myself, for I shall feel that I have been the cause of the disaster."

“Have no misgivings, Beata,” said Bonnivet, smiling confidently. “I am not destined to be captured. Do not let us mar the happiness of our brief interview by any thoughts of danger. Let us think only of ourselves—of our love. When we are separated—when I am again with the army, and you are alone in this chamber—we shall regret each moment we have wasted.”

“I would shake off my fears if I could,” said the countess. “But I find it impossible. Had I expected you, it might have been otherwise. But you have taken me so by surprise, that I cannot master my emotion.”

“How could I prepare you for my coming, Beata?” said Bonnivet. “I have long nourished the design, but the means of executing it only occurred to-day, when this safe-conduct fell into my hands. Then I resolved—cost what it might!—that I would behold you again. Mounted on a swift steed, I left Abbiate-Grasso at nightfall, at-

tended only by a single esquire, and I hope to be back at the camp before my absence is discovered."

"Heaven grant you may!" she ejaculated.

"My steed seemed to know the errand on which he was bent, and bore me on with wondrous speed; but if he sympathises with his master, he will not have the same spirit on his return. It is strange, Beata—now that the long wished-for moment has arrived—now that I am here—I cannot realise my happiness. It seems like a dream."

"Holy Virgin! what is that?" exclaimed Beata, as the trampling of horses was heard in the Corso.

"Merely the patrol," replied Bonnivet.

"No; it is not the patrol!" she cried. "The troop has stopped at the gates of the palace. Stay where you are! I will see what it means."

So saying, she flew to the balcony, and presently returned with a cheek blanched with terror.

"Heaven preserve us!" she exclaimed. "It is the Duke of Milan, with a large escort."

"The Duke of Milan!" exclaimed Bonnivet.

"What can bring him here at this hour?"

As he spoke, a loud knocking was heard at the gate.

"What means this visit?" said Bonnivet.

"I know not," replied the countess, "unless your arrival at Milan has been discovered."

"That is impossible. The guard at the Porta Romana allowed me to pass without question, on seeing my safe-conduct."

"There are spies in your camp, and one of them may have brought information of your departure," said Beata. "But the duke must not find you here. Conceal yourself," she added, opening the door of a closet, "and do not venture forth till I release you."

Scarcely had Bonnivet entered this hiding-place when the Duke of Milan, accompanied by a guard, entered the saloon.

"You must excuse me if I appear abrupt,

countess," he said, glancing suspiciously round the room. "My business does not admit of ceremony. You will believe that I have not come hither on any idle errand."

"I am curious to learn the meaning of your highness's visit," remarked Beata, vainly endeavouring to conceal her agitation.

"I will not keep you in suspense, madame," replied Sforza. "Where is the cavalier who entered the palace not half an hour ago, and was shown into this room by your attendant, Eufemia?"

"He is lost!" mentally ejaculated the countess, trembling and not knowing what answer to make.

"Where is the Admiral Bonnivet, madame?" said Sforza, advancing towards her. "I know he is in the palace. Where have you hidden him? Confess. I *will* have him."

"The cavalier who entered just now, and who has since quitted the palace, was not Bonnivet, but Galeazzo Visconti," replied the countess.

"I know better, madame," said Sforza. "To convince you that equivocation is useless, I will tell you what has happened. Little more than an hour ago two well-mounted horsemen arrived at the Porta Romana, and presented a safe-conduct purporting to be for Galeazzo Visconti and his esquire. What was the astonishment of the captain of the guard, while scrutinising the self-styled Visconti—the real Galeazzo being well known to him—to recognise the commander of the French army, the Admiral Bonnivet. He made no remark, however, but allowed the Admiral and his companion to enter the city, feeling it to be of the highest importance to ascertain their design. He therefore followed them with half a dozen men to the Piazza del Duomo, where Bonnivet dismounted, and leaving his horse in charge of his esquire, marched off, fancying himself unobserved—but the captain of the guard and two soldiers were on his track. They saw him pause before

this palace. You, countess, were on the balcony. They heard your lover—for such he must be—exchange a few words with you, after which he was admitted. As soon as this took place, the captain of the guard hastened to the ducal palace to acquaint me with the important discovery he had made. I came hither at once.”

“You have come quickly, duke, but you have come too late,” rejoined Beata. “He you seek is gone.”

“Not so, madame,” rejoined Sforza, smiling incredulously. “The gates have been closely watched ever since the Admiral entered the palace. No one has come forth. Where is he?”

“If your highness will dismiss your attendants, I will tell you,” she replied.

“Withdraw,” said Sforza to the guard, “but remain outside. Now, madame?” he added, when they were alone.

Before the countess could make any reply the

door of the closet opened, and Bonnivet stepped forth.

"Imprudent!" she exclaimed. "You have betrayed yourself."

"Discovery was certain, madame," remarked Sforza. "I am obliged to the Lord Admiral for saving me further trouble. My lord, you are my prisoner."

"Not yet, duke," rejoined Bonnivet, who did not appear at all uneasy; "I have a proposition to make to your highness, which I think will be agreeable to you. You must be quite certain that I did not come to Milan with any hostile intent."

"I do not ask the motive of your visit, my lord," replied Sforza. "It is sufficient that you are here—and my prisoner."

"Hear me out, duke," said Bonnivet. "I have to propose an exchange of prisoners."

"An exchange!—ha! Whom do you offer?"

"Giovanni de' Medici," replied Bonnivet.

"Giovanni de' Medici!" echoed Sforza, in surprise. "I did not know he was a prisoner."

"I took him this morning," returned Bonnivet. "Let me return to Abbiate-Grasso, and I will set him free."

"You underrate yourself, Admiral," said Sforza. "I shall lose by the exchange."

"I will add ten thousand ducats," said Bonnivet.

"Excuse the doubt, my lord; but have you that sum?" demanded Sforza.

"On my faith I have, duke," replied Bonnivet. "The money ought to be paid to the Swiss—but you shall have it."

"Then I agree. I am sorry to rob the Swiss," said Sforza, laughing, "but all is fair in love and war. I give you an hour with your mistress, Admiral. Then you must depart. I will leave a guard at the gate of the palace who will conduct you and your esquire to the Porta Romana. Tomorrow I shall expect Giovanni de' Medici—and

the ransom-money. Good night, my lord. I will no longer interrupt your tête-à-tête. You see, fair countess, what a price your lover is willing to pay for an hour of your sweet society."

With this, Sforza retired and gave the necessary orders, so that Bonnivet was enabled to quit Milan without molestation.

Next morning, Giovanni de' Medici returned to Milan, and the ransom-money was paid.

VI.

HOW BOURBON ASSUMED THE COMMAND OF THE IMPERIAL
ARMY.

THE numerical force of the Imperial army at this juncture was computed at forty thousand men, a large proportion of whom were mercenaries. There were seven thousand Spaniards under Pescara; ten thousand Germans under Lannoy; four thousand Italians under Giovanni de' Medici; eight hundred lances, and eight hundred light horse, mixed Italians and Spaniards, under various captains. The Venetian army, under the Duke of

Urbino, consisted of upwards of six thousand foot, all well armed, and eleven hundred horse. The Pontifical forces, the leadership of which was given to Gonzaga, numbered a thousand men—five hundred infantry and five hundred horse. Besides these, there was a strong garrison at Pavia, under the command of the renowned Antonio de Leyva, consisting of five thousand infantry and eleven hundred horse, and these were subsequently reinforced by the Pontifical troops. Possessed of such an army, led by generals of such valour and experience as Pescara and Lannoy, and now commanded by Bourbon, who was animated as well by the desire of distinction as by the thirst for vengeance, it could scarcely be doubted that success awaited the Imperialists.

On the other hand, though its numbers had been greatly reduced since his entrance into Italy, Bonnivet could still boast a powerful army. Of the thirty thousand men who had descended with

him into the fertile plains of Lombardy, scarce twenty thousand were now left; but he was in expectation of large reinforcements from France, and he also counted upon five thousand Grisons under the command of Dietingen de Salis, and eight thousand Swiss. From his position at Abbiate-Grasso, he was able to obtain abundant supplies from the Lomellino.

Such was the relative position of the two armies when Bourbon assumed the command of the Imperial forces.

On his arrival at the camp he was hailed with enthusiasm, and as he rode along the line, followed by his adherents, he was greeted with shouts by soldiers of all countries—Spaniards, Germans, and Italians. This was a proud moment for the illustrious fugitive, and made amends for all the sufferings he had undergone. His breast beat high with ardour, and visions of conquest flitted before his gaze. With such a host at his command, what could he not achieve?

The camp of the Imperialists occupied a large space of ground, but owing to the remarkable flatness of the plain, could only be fully surveyed from the castle of Garlasco, which was situated at its farthest extremity. In this castle Bourbon was lodged, and as he mounted its keep a splendid view was offered him. Not only was the whole of his own army in sight, but, though some leagues off, he could clearly distinguish the French camp at Abbiate-Grasso. In other respects, the prospect was very striking. League upon league of the fertile plains of Lombardy, intersected with rivers and canals, came within his ken. Numberless cities, towns, and villages could be descried. In the extreme distance could be seen Milan, with its Duomo, towers, and churches; Lodi and Pavia were also distinguishable; and the whole course of the Ticino could be traced from the latter city to Abbiate-Grasso. Looking towards the north, Novara and Vercelli—each important places—could be discerned; and nearer were Vigevano and Mortara.

Many other towns could likewise be seen, and the Ticino was not the only river visible. Both the Sesia and the Po could be distinguished. Bounding this vast plain on the north rose the enormous barrier of the Alps, foremost amid which stood Monte Rosa, while in the far distance on the west could be discerned the range of the Apennines.

From the walls of Garlasco, Bourbon carefully studied Bonnivet's position, and coming to the conclusion that the French general must infallibly surrender, he resolved not to give him battle at once, as he had intended, but to adopt the Fabian policy of Prospero Colonna, and wait.

To Bourbon a camp life was the pleasantest that could be led. No music was so agreeable to his ear as the sound of warlike instruments; no pastime so pleasant as the practice of military manœuvres. He did not rest till he had satisfied himself by personal scrutiny that every corps of the army was in good order; and such was his affability, that he soon

became popular with the soldiers of each nation. At all hours of the night he made his rounds to see that good watch was kept; and on these occasions he was only attended by the faithful Hugues, whom he still retained in his service. Constant nocturnal skirmishes took place between flying bands of the hostile armies; but without material advantage to either side.

Nearly a month had now elapsed since Bourbon had assumed his command, and already Bonnivet, whose position became daily more perilous, had thrice offered him battle; but Bourbon, with the approval of the other leaders, on each occasion refused to fight. During this interval Bourbon, accompanied by Lannoy, Pescara, and the Duke of Urbino, had repeatedly ridden along the right bank of the Ticino, in order to reconnoitre the French forces; and he had also more than once visited Pavia to consult with Antonio de Leyva and Gonzaga, and see that the garrison was in good order.

VII.

HOW BONNIVET RESOLVED TO RETREAT FROM NOVARA.

BECOMING apprehensive that he should lose his supplies from the Lomellino, whence he chiefly derived them, Bonnivet at length crossed the Ticino with the bulk of his army, placing his vanguard at Vigevano, and the main body of the army at Mortara—a strongly fortified city, and where he could obtain provisions from Montferrat, Vercelli, and Novara.

He did not abandon Abbiate-Grasso, but left a thousand infantry and a hundred horse to guard the

place—a very inadequate force, as was speedily shown. Three days afterwards, the town was attacked by Giovanni de' Medici, assisted by Sforza, with five hundred of the élite of the garrison of Milan. The assault began early in the morning, and was conducted with such extraordinary vigour, that, in spite of a gallant defence, the place was taken before night. Fatal consequences, however, attended this bold achievement. The plague at that time existed at Abbiate-Grasso, and the spoils of the town being carried off by the victors, the scourge was conveyed to Milan, and eventually committed dreadful ravages in that city.

The capture of Abbiate-Grasso was not the only success achieved by the Imperialists. Others followed in rapid succession. Sartirano, an important post occupied by the French, was besieged and taken by Bourbon before Bonnivet could succour it from Mortara. As the Imperialists continued to press upon his right, fearing his supplies might be

cut off he retired to Novara, and established himself there, hoping to be reinforced by the Grisons and Swiss. But he was disappointed. Conducted by Dietingen de Salis, the Grisons got as far as Bergamo, where they ought to have been joined by the Prince Federico da Bozzolo. But he was shut up in Lodi. Harassed by Giovanni de' Medici, who was sent with a detachment of light horse to drive them back, unable to obtain their promised pay or an escort of cavalry, the Grisons, disgusted and indignant, returned to their native valleys. Having accomplished this task, the active Medici destroyed the bridge at Buffalora, thus enclosing Bonnivet between the Ticino and the Sesia, and liberating Milan from all chance of attack.

Bonnivet was not more fortunate in regard to his Swiss reinforcements than with the Grisons. Eight thousand of these hardy mountaineers made their way to the neighbourhood of Vercelli, on the right bank of the Sesia, in order to effect a junc-

tion with the French army at Novara. But the river was swollen and impassable, and the Swiss, having learned that the Grisons had retired, became greatly discontented, and refused to join the French until they first received their pay. In vain Bonnivet sent Captain Diesbach to remonstrate with them. They remained sullen and inflexible, alleging that the French king had broken faith with them, having failed to send the Duc de Longueville with four hundred lances to Ivry to escort them, and now they were denied their pay.

The Admiral's position had thus become extremely perilous. Deprived of the large reinforcements he had expected, and which alone could enable him successfully to prosecute the campaign; confronted by a hostile army greatly superior to his own in number, and stimulated by constant successes; with his own troops almost decimated by disease and famine; in danger of losing his supplies,

owing to the activity of the enemy, his utter defeat or an inglorious surrender seemed inevitable.

Bonnivet determined to retreat, but before putting his design into execution, he summoned the principal leaders of the French army to a council. With the exception of the Maréchal de Montmorency, who had been attacked by the plague, and had already left Novara, they all attended; and the assemblage comprised the Comte de Saint-Pol, the Seigneur de Vandenesse, the Chevalier Bayard, the Vidame de Chartres, De Lorges, Annebaut, Beauvais (surnamed "the Brave"), Renzo da Ceri, and the Swiss captain, Diesbach. All these personages were fully armed, save that they had taken off their helmets and unbuckled their swords, and, as they were grouped around a table placed in the centre of the tent in which they met, they formed a very striking picture.

Conspicuous among them for the richness of

his armour, which was damaskeened with gold, and for his splendid person and handsome lineaments, was the Lord Admiral. The Comte de Saint-Pol was also a noble-looking warrior, and gorgeously accoutred. The veteran Vandenesse was cased in black armour, and had a martial and determined aspect. The Vidame de Chartres had a proud and resolute look. Annebaut, De Lorges, and the brave Beauvais were all stalwart captains, whose scarred visages proclaimed the numerous conflicts they had been engaged in. Renzo da Ceri was of slighter frame, and younger than the last-mentioned warriors, and his graceful person, sheathed in lacquered armour, contrasted strongly with the robust frame and rugged physiognomy of the Swiss leader, Diesbach, near whom he sat.

But, although each individual in the group was worthy of notice, the one who would infallibly have fixed the attention of a beholder was the Chevalier Bayard.

Bayard was fashioned in the heroic mould. Above the ordinary height, powerfully built, and possessed of prodigious strength, he wore his ponderous armour, dented by many a blow, as easily as if it had been a silken doublet. His features corresponded with his frame, being massive and nobly sculptured, generally stern in expression, yet sometimes lighted up by a pleasant smile.

The doughty champion was now approaching fifty, and though his mighty arm had lost none of its power, and his features bore few traces of age, his once raven locks were thickly sown with grey. It had been remarked by his soldiers, by whom he was idolised, that since the affair of Robecco their captain had looked sombre and discontented, and they fancied that the thought of the defeat rankled in his breast.

More than human valour seemed to beat in Bayard's broad breast—more than human strength appeared to reside in his herculean frame and

powerful arm. No danger ever appalled him—nay, his spirit rose with danger, inciting him to deeds worthy of the heroic ages. Such was his conduct at Garigliano, when, wholly unsupported, he defended the bridge against the entire Spanish host, and saved the French army. Besides the inconceivable daring of all his actions, their grandeur made him the central figure in every conflict in which he engaged, and excited the admiration both of friends and foes.

When only eighteen, Bayard followed Charles VIII. into Italy, and won his spurs at the battle of Fornova, where he performed prodigies of valour, and had two horses killed under him. He was several times made prisoner, and more than once grievously wounded, but while free he was ever with the army. Courts he despised, and hence the neglect he experienced from François I., who placed his favourites over his head. But other monarchs appreciated him at his true worth, and

after a signal victory which he had gained at Padua, the Emperor Maximilian said to him, in the presence of the whole army, "Chevalier Bayard, the king my brother is happy in having a knight like you. I would I had a dozen such, even though each cost me a hundred thousand florins a year."

Nor did our own bluff King Hal use less flattering language towards him at the siege of Térouanne. "Were all French captains as valiant as you, Chevalier Bayard," said Henry, "I must speedily raise the siege of this place."

Bayard, as is well known, after the famous battle of Marignano, which he himself had helped to win, and where he fought side by side with the Constable de Bourbon, was called upon by the victorious king to dub him knight.

Bayard would have declined the honour, but François insisted, and bent the knee before him. Whereupon Bayard, drawing his sword, and touching the king's shoulder with the blade, exclaimed:

“Sire, may it be with you as with Roland or Oliver, Godfrey or Baldwin, his brother. Certes, you are the first king that ever I dubbed knight.” Then pressing his lips to the blade, he said, “Happy art thou, my sword, to have performed this office for so brave a monarch! Henceforth, good sword, shalt thou be kept as a holy relic, and honoured above all other weapons!”

But though thus distinguished, Bayard, as we have shown, was afterwards neglected by François I. The bravest and ablest captain in the army; consulted by the leaders on all occasions of difficulty, and adored by the soldiers; far fitter for command than those placed above him, he was never made a general. The only reward he received for his incalculable services was the order of Saint Michel.

Though his loyalty was unshaken by the king's ingratitude, the appointment of Bonnivet to the supreme command of the Italian army gave Bayard great offence. He could not conquer his dislike

of the haughty favourite, and, moreover, entertained but a poor opinion of his military qualities. Nevertheless, he served him well and faithfully. In the unlucky affair of Robecco he fancied Bonnivet had wilfully exposed him to certain defeat, and this he could not forgive.

“I have sent for you, messeigneurs, to ask your advice,” said Bonnivet, glancing round at the assemblage, all of whom looked grave and anxious, “and I entreat you to give it freely. You are all aware of the critical position in which we are placed. You know that we are shut up between two rivers, the Ticino and the Sesia. You know that the army is greatly reduced by famine, sickness, and desertion, and that the enemy, with a force more than double our own in number, is at Cameriano, only two leagues off. You know that we have lost Abbiate-Grasso, and that the bridge over the Ticino at Buffalora has been destroyed by Giovanni de’ Medici. You know that the faith-

less Grisons have returned to their native valleys with Dietingen de Salis. You know that the eight thousand Swiss, who are at Gattinara, on the opposite bank of the Sesia, have refused to join us. Aware of all these disastrous circumstances, what counsel do you give?"

All were silent, none liking to recommend retreat or surrender. At last Bayard spoke.

"You ask our advice, Lord Admiral," he said.

"Will you be guided by it if we offer it?"

"I cannot pledge myself to that, but I will give your counsel due consideration," rejoined Bonnivet.

"Speak freely."

"Were I in your place," said Bayard, "I would compel the enemy to give me battle, and by a grand masterstroke retrieve my former reverses, or perish in the effort."

"It would be madness," rejoined Bonnivet. "As I have said, the enemy's forces are double our own, and in better condition."

"Then shut yourself up in Novara, and stand a siege. The city is well fortified, and will hold out till we receive reinforcements."

"I doubt it," remarked the Comte de Saint-Pol. "Our supplies from the Lomellino will be cut off, and the country around Novara, as you know, has been laid waste."

"Tête-Dieu! we will get supplies from the foe," cried Bayard. "Our condition is not so desperate as you suppose. If the enemy are two to one, what matters it?"

"If we were all Bayards it would matter little if they were ten to one," rejoined Saint-Pol. "But our men are disheartened. Of late, we have had nothing but ill success. You yourself have been worsted."

"True," replied Bayard, in a sombre tone, as he thought of the affair of Robecco.

"You have seen your countrymen, Captain Diesbach," said De Lorges to that officer. "Do they refuse to join us?"

"Absolutely," replied Diesbach, "unless they receive their pay. They are inflexible. They declare the King of France has broken faith with them in not sending the Duc de Longueville with an escort of cavalry to meet them at Ivry, and that they will not fight for him."

"Let the vile mercenaries go! We can do without them," cried Beauvais.

"Mercenaries they may be, but they have good ground of complaint," rejoined Diesbach, angrily. "They have been brought hither by promises that have not been kept. My own men declare that, unless they receive their pay, they will at once disband, and return with their countrymen who are waiting for them at Gattinara. The Swiss will not fight for mere glory."

"But you have sufficient influence over your men to quiet their murmurs, and prevent them from disbanding, Captain Diesbach," said Bonnivet. "Give them the positive assurance from me that they *shall* be paid—speedily paid."

"Promises will not content them, my lord," replied Diesbach. "I must have something in hand."

"You ask an impossibility, captain," replied Bonnivet. "My coffers are quite empty."

"Quite empty!" exclaimed Diesbach. "A month ago you promised me ten thousand ducats."

"Very true, captain. But the whole of the money is gone. I have had a heavy ransom to pay."

"Whose ransom, my lord, may I make bold to inquire?" said Diesbach.

"Ask the Duke of Milan," replied Bonnivet. "My coffers are empty, I repeat. But all arrears shall be fully paid—as soon as I receive the expected supplies from France."

"I will tell my soldiers what you say, my lord," returned Diesbach. "But I know what their answer will be. They will laugh in my face, disband, and cross the Sesia to join their comrades. If

such should be the case, I must perforce accompany them."

"I shall not hinder you, captain," said Bonnivet.
"Dissuade them, if you can—if not, adieu!"

"It pains me to separate from you thus, my brave companions in arms, but there is no help for it," rejoined Diesbach. And bowing to the Admiral and the assembled leaders, who returned his salutation coldly, he quitted the tent.

"By this desertion of the Swiss we shall lose five thousand auxiliaries," said Bonnivet. "Nothing is left but retreat."

"Tête-Dieu! we are not yet come to that pass," cried Bayard. "Again I say, let us provoke the enemy to battle. If we do not conquer, we shall die with honour."

"How say you, messeigneurs?" demanded Bonnivet. "I have every faith in the Chevalier Bayard, but he is sometimes too rash. I will be governed by the general voice. Shall we risk an engagement?"

"No," replied the leaders, unanimously. "It is too hazardous."

"You are overruled, you see, Chevalier Bayard," said Bonnivet.

"You will regret your determination, my lord," rejoined Bayard, chafing fiercely. "If you retreat, Bourbon will say you are afraid of him."

"I shall not be turned from my purpose by a taunt," said Bonnivet. "I will not sacrifice my men."

"Then you decide upon immediate retreat?" demanded the Comte de Saint-Pol.

"Such is my decision," replied Bonnivet. "Tomorrow night I shall quit Novara and march to Romagnano. If I can get the army safely across the Sesia, all will be well."

"Think not to elude Bourbon," remarked Bayard. "The thirst of vengeance will make him doubly vigilant. He will assuredly cut off our retreat."

"The design must be kept so secret that no in-

telligence can be conveyed to him," said Bonnavet. "To you, De Lorges," he added to that captain, "I confide the construction of the bridge of boats across the Sesia. Set out for Romagnano to-night."

"Your commands shall be obeyed, general," returned De Lorges. "On your arrival at Romagnano, you shall find the bridge ready for the passage of the army."

"Use all possible caution," said Vandenesse. "If Bourbon hears of the bridge, he will guess the design."

"He shall *not* hear of it," returned De Lorges. "Not a soul shall quit Romagnano."

"Then all is settled," said Bonnavet. "We will meet again at noon to-morrow, when the order of march can be finally arranged."

"At what hour do you propose to set out?" demanded Saint-Pol.

"At dusk," replied Bonnavet. "Each leader will have his corps in readiness. You, Saint-Pol, will

take charge of the first battalion. To you, Vandenesse, I confide the artillery. Chevalier Bayard, you will bring up the rear-guard. I shall be with you."

On this the council broke up, and the leaders quitted the tent.

VIII.

IN WHICH BAYARD RELATES HIS DREAM TO DE LORGES.

BONNIVET quitted Novara as agreed upon, and marched throughout the night, but he did not reach Romagnano until late in the afternoon of the following day, the progress of the troops being much impeded by the bad state of the roads; but as the men were greatly fatigued by their hurried march, he determined to give them a few hours' repose, and to defer the passage of the river until the following morning at daybreak. In this decision he acted against the opinion of Bayard, who advised him to cross at once (the bridge of boats having

been completed by De Lorges), and take up his quarters on the opposite bank of the Sesia, but Bonnivet would not be turned from his purpose.

"We are better here than at Gattinara, which is full of mutinous Swiss," he said. "I have no apprehension of attack. Long before the enemy can come up, we shall have crossed the river and destroyed the bridge."

Bayard said no more. But he could not shake off his misgivings.

That evening the valiant knight rode through the camp alone. It was still early, but the greater part of the soldiers, fatigued by their long march, and knowing they must be astir soon after midnight, had already sought a couch, and were buried in slumber. Some few were awake, and were furbishing their arms and accoutrements. Having ascertained that good watch was kept by the advanced guard, Bayard quitted the camp and rode towards the river to view the bridge of boats.

It was an enchanting evening—such as only can be seen in a southern clime. The deep dark vault of heaven was without a cloud, and not a breath of wind was stirring. The sounds customarily heard in a camp alone broke the stillness.

Before he approached the river, Bayard halted to gaze on the lovely and peaceful scene—for peaceful it looked, though a large army was nigh at hand. From the spot where the knight had halted a magnificent view of the Alps was obtained, and his eye wandered along the mighty range till it rested upon the snow-clad peaks of Monte Rosa. Strange to say, even at that moment, when the rest of the ridge looked white and spectral, a warm radiance tinged the summit of this superb mountain.

Never in his eyes had the eternal Alps looked so grand and solemn as they did on that evening—the last he was destined to witness. He could not remove his gaze from them, and the contempla-

tion of the magnificent picture insensibly lifted his thoughts towards Heaven, and drew from him a heartfelt prayer. He then rode slowly on towards the river. On either side his view was obstructed by trees, and by the luxuriant vegetation of the country. The Sesia, which took its course through the broad plains of Lombardy to mingle its waters with those of the classic Po, was here of no great width, and could ordinarily be forded, but heavy rains had rendered it for the time impassable. The banks of the river were skirted by tall poplars.

Adjoining the picturesque little town of Romagnano, which was built on the near bank of the river, were the ruins of an old bridge, which had been destroyed by Lautrec during the late campaign, and it was close to these broken arches and piers that De Lorges had constructed the bridge of boats.

Farther down the river, about half a league off, could be seen Gattinara, a town about the

same size as Romagnano. As we have intimated, the whole country was one flat fertile plain, extending almost over the whole of Lombardy to the foot of the Alps. A strong mounted guard was stationed near the bridge, and as Bayard drew near, the leader of the guard, who was no other than De Lorges, rode towards him.

"Good even, noble captain," said De Lorges.
"What think you of the bridge?"

"It will answer its purpose," rejoined Bayard.
"But I would it were destroyed."

"That is, were you with the army on the other side of the river. So do I. We ought to have crossed to-night. Why wait till morning?"

"Ay, why?" cried Bayard, angrily. "Simply because the Admiral has so decided. He says the men are worn out, and must have repose. Methinks they could have rested at Gattinara. To-morrow may be too late."

"Let us hope not," said De Lorges. "I do

not think the enemy can have divined our purpose."

"I think differently," rejoined Bayard. "I believe that Bourbon is in hot pursuit of us."

"But you have no grounds for such belief?" said De Lorges, inquiringly.

"None save the conviction that he will not let Bonnivet escape. Well, if the Admiral chooses to indulge in false security, we cannot help it. For my own part, I am full of apprehension."

"It is not like you to feel uneasiness," said De Lorges. "We shall laugh at such fears at this hour to-morrow."

"Who knows that either of us may be then alive!" ejaculated Bayard, gravely. "I do not think I shall. Not many minutes ago, as I was gazing at yon mighty mountains, a presentiment crossed me that I should never behold another evening."

"Shake off these melancholy thoughts!" cried

De Lorges. "A long and glorious career awaits you."

"Alas! no," replied Bayard. "I am prepared to meet the blow whenever it may come; but I cannot quit this fair world without some regret. Listen to me, De Lorges, and recollect what I am about to say to you. My uncle, Georges du Terrail, Bishop of Grenoble, who took charge of me during my infancy, thus admonished me: 'My child,' he said, in a tone and with a look which I can well remember, 'be worthy of your ancestors. Be noble, like the founder of our race, who fell at the feet of King John at the battle of Poitiers. Be valiant like your great-grandsire and your grandsire, both of whom died in arms—the first at Agincourt, the other at Montlhéry. Prove yourself the true son of your intrepid father, and my beloved brother, who fell covered with honourable wounds while defending his country.' Thus spake the pious and good Bishop of Grenoble, who

loved me as a son. I have striven to follow his injunctions. I have sought to emulate the glorious deeds of my ancestors, and I have done no act that could be deemed unworthy of their name. I have prayed that I might not die on a bed of sickness, but on the battle-field, and I trust that Heaven will grant my prayer."

"I nothing doubt it, noble captain," said De Lorges, deeply moved. "But may the day be far hence!"

"It is close at hand, De Lorges. I am sure of it," said Bayard, in a tone that startled his hearer. "I dreamed last night that all my valiant ancestors appeared to me. I knew them, though I had seen none of them before, except my father, and his features had faded from my recollection. But I knew them all. Warlike phantoms they were. The Bishop of Grenoble, who has long been laid in the tomb, was with them. Their lips moved, but I could hear no words, and I vainly essayed to

address them, for my tongue clove to my palate. But I could not mistake the meaning of their looks and gestures. The ghostly warriors gave me welcome, and the good bishop smiled upon me. I shall soon join them."

There was a pause. De Lorges was too much impressed by what he had heard to make a remark.

"I have lived long enough," pursued Bayard, breaking the silence—"too long, perhaps, for I ought to have died at Robecoc. My chief regret in quitting the world is, that I have not done enough for my country."

"Then live!" cried De Lorges. "France can ill spare you."

"My life is in the hands of my Maker," rejoined Bayard, humbly. "I shall resign it cheerfully to Him who gave it—but I shall not throw it away. And now a word to you, my friend and companion-in-arms. I am the last of my line. I have no son to whom I can say, 'Live worthily of your

ancestors,' but I can say to you, De Lorges, whom I love as a brother, Live, so that your name may be without reproach."

"I will try to do so," replied the valiant captain, earnestly.

"I am poor, as you know," pursued Bayard, "for such money as I have won I have bestowed upon my soldiers, but if I fall, I bequeath you my sword—the sword with which I bestowed knight-hood upon the king. Take it, and may it serve you as well as it has served me. Adieu!"

And, without another word, he rode back to the camp, while De Lorges returned to his post.

IX.

THE RETREAT OF ROMAGNANO.

As Bayard had conjectured, Bonnivet's departure from Novara had not escaped the vigilance of Bourbon, who immediately started in pursuit with the whole of the Imperial army. The march endured from early morn till late at night, when men and horses became so much fatigued, that a few hours' rest appeared indispensable. But Bourbon would not consent to a halt.

"We are only a few leagues from Romagnano," he said. "We must on."

"The enemy cannot cross the Sesia," urged Pescara. "The river is flooded, and there is no bridge."

"A bridge of boats will enable them to cross," said Bourbon. "I am certain Bonnivet will make the attempt to-night—or at daybreak, at latest. If we halt, we shall lose him."

"But the men need repose. They are dropping with fatigue," urged the Duke of Urbino.

"They shall rest after the battle," rejoined Bourbon, peremptorily. "On! on!"

So the army continued its march.

At cock-crow, the trumpets of the French army sounded a loud *réveillé*, and the whole host arose. Then were heard the loud calls of the officers mustering their men, the clatter of arms, the neighing of steeds, and all the stirring sounds that proclaim a camp in motion.

While the tents were being struck, and the various companies forming, Bonnivet, fully armed,

and attended by the leaders, rode along the line, and, having completed his inspection, issued his final orders. Each leader returned to his respective corps; the first battalion, under the command of the Comte de Saint-Pol, began to move towards Romagnano; and the remainder of the army followed; Bonnivet himself bringing up the rear-guard.

Day broke just as the first column neared the bridge, the rosy clouds in the eastern sky giving promise of a glorious day. The Alps stood out in all their majesty, not a single cloud resting upon their snowy peaks. Monte Rosa had already caught the first rays of the sun. Ere long the whole scene was flooded with light. Casques and corslets glittered in the sunbeams, lances and bills seemed tipped with fire, and pennons, banners, and plumes fluttered in the fresh morning breeze. Even the swollen waters of the Sesia looked bright and beautiful. The bridge of boats resounded with

the trampling of horse and the regular tread of the foot soldiers, as band after band crossed it in close array. It was a gay and glorious sight. Two battalions had gained the opposite bank, and the Vidame de Chartres was about to pass over with his cross-bowmen, when De Lorges galloped up.

"The enemy is at hand!" he exclaimed. "The main body of the army must be got over the bridge as rapidly as possible. The Lord Admiral will cover its passage with the rear-guard."

"Bourbon must have marched all night to come up with us," said De Chartres. "In another hour we should have been safe."

"Not a moment must be lost!" cried De Lorges. "Take your men across at once."

While the Vidame de Chartres hurried his cross-bowmen over the bridge, De Lorges clapped spurs to his steed and galloped back to the rear of the army.

Bonnivet had been taken by surprise by his

implacable foe. Just as he had put the last battalion in motion, three or four scouts galloped up, shouting that the enemy was at hand; and he had only just time to form his men into line of battle when Bourbon appeared at the head of a squadron of reiters, and at once attacked him. Impetuous as was the onset, the French gendarmerie sustained it firmly. A general conflict then ensued, during which Bourbon pressed on; and though the French disputed the ground valiantly, they were compelled slowly to retire.

Learning that Pescara was coming up with his host, the Admiral made a desperate charge, and while leading on his men he was struck by a heavy shot, which shattered his right arm, and caused a great effusion of blood. Feeling he could not much longer sit his horse, he rode to the rear and dismounted, and was soon afterwards joined by Bayard, who had succeeded in driving back the enemy.

"You are not much hurt, I trust, Admiral?" said Bayard.

"Sufficiently to place me hors de combat," replied Bonnivet, faintly. "Would to Heaven I had listened to your counsel, and crossed the river last night! But the army must not be lost through my imprudence. You perceive that I am not in a condition either to fight or lead. I confide the command to you. Save the army if possible."

"'Tis late—very late," rejoined Bayard. "But no matter. I will save the army, but it will cost me my life to do so."

"I trust not," said Bonnivet. "I hope we shall meet again, when I may thank you for the service."

"We never *shall* meet again in this world," said Bayard.

"Then let us part in friendship," said Bonnivet. "You have not forgiven me for the affair of Robecco."

"I forgive you now, my lord," rejoined Bayard. "Farewell! You may rely on me."

Bonnivet would have spoken, but he became suddenly faint, and if the chirurgien, who had come up to dress his wound, had not caught him, he would have fallen.

“Tarry not to dress the Lord Admiral’s wound,” said Bayard. “Let him be conveyed across the bridge with all possible despatch. He must not fall into Bourbon’s hands.”

“It shall be done,” replied the chirurgien. And placing Bonnivet upon a litter, which was brought up at the moment, and throwing a cloak over him, he caused him to be borne quickly away.

Meantime, Bayard dashed into the thickest of the fight, hewing down all before him, while his soldiers, reanimated by his appearance, followed him, shouting, “A Bayard!—a Bayard!”

The battle now raged furiously, and many noble feats of arms were performed on both sides. Bayard’s aim was to enable the main body of the French army to cross the bridge, and he succeeded,

by making repeated and resistless charges upon the foe. Anon driving back Bourbon's forces—anon retreating before them—the dauntless knight at last reached the bridge, where he made a stand with the remnant of his men-at-arms.

As the Imperialists came up, a destructive fire was poured upon them by the French arquebusiers, who were drawn up, under the command of Vandenesse, on the opposite side of the Sesia, and in another moment the artillery began to open fire, and did terrible execution. Notwithstanding this, Bourbon steadily advanced, and the German and Spanish musqueteers returned the fire of their foemen. In spite of his almost superhuman efforts, it was impossible that Bayard could long maintain his position. He therefore ordered his men to cross the bridge, and, while they obeyed, he disputed, single-handed, the advance of the opposing host.

Twenty lances were pointed at him—bullets rattled against his armour—but without doing in-

jury to himself or his steed. Thus he retired across the bridge—ever keeping his face to the foe. A troop of horsemen followed him, but could not effect his capture.

Ere many minutes, the French artillerymen were driven from their guns, and both horse and foot forced back in confusion. It was while rallying his men that the glorious career of Bayard was cut short. A bolt from a cross-bow struck him, and penetrating his armour at a point where it was weakest, lodged deeply in his side. He felt at once that the wound was mortal, and exclaimed, "Holy Jesus! I am slain!"

Hearing the exclamation, De Lorges, who was nigh at hand, flew towards him, and prevented him from falling from his steed. With the assistance of some of the soldiers the wounded knight was borne from the scene of conflict, and as he was being thus removed, De Lorges inquired anxiously if he was much hurt.

"Mortally," replied Bayard. "I knew it would be so. But I have fulfilled my promise to Bon-nivet. I have saved the army. It is useless to carry me farther. Lay me at the foot of yonder tree—with my face towards the foe."

It was done as he directed.,

"I have no priest to shrive me," he murmured—"no crucifix to clasp—but lay my sword upon my breast. It must serve for a cross. Stay not with me," he added to De Lorges and the soldiers. "You are needed elsewhere."

In this position he watched the conflict, and saw with anguish, greater than that of his wound, which did not extort a groan from him, that his soldiers were driven back. At the head of the victorious Imperialists rode Bourbon, sword in hand, and with his face flushed with triumph. No sooner did the conquering general perceive the wounded knight than he galloped towards him.

"How fares it with you, noble chevalier?" cried Bourbon, in accents of deep commiseration. "I trust you are not badly hurt. I grieve to see you in this piteous case."

"Waste not your pity on me," replied Bayard, sternly. "Grieve for yourself—you have more reason. I would not change places with you. I die for my country—you triumph as a rebel and a traitor."

"Beshrew your tongue, Bayard!" exclaimed Bourbon, impatiently. "I cannot listen to such language even from you. I am no more to be charged with disloyalty than was the Duke of Burgundy when fighting against Charles VII. and Louis XI. I have cast off my allegiance to your perfidious sovereign."

"But you are fighting against your country," rejoined Bayard. "Whose blood reddens your sword? You are elated with triumph, but it were better for your soul's welfare that you were laid

low like me. Your success is deplorable,—the end will be terrible.”

“Hear me, Bayard!” cried Bourbon. “To none other but yourself would I deign to justify myself. But we have been brothers-in-arms—we fought together at Marignano. You know the wrongs I have endured.”

“Wrongs are no justification of treason,” rejoined Bayard. “I myself have been wronged, but I have continued faithful. You should have died at Marignano. France might then have mourned your loss.”

“Can I do aught for your comfort?” demanded Bourbon.

“No,” replied Bayard, “save to rid me of your presence. I would fix my thoughts on Heaven.”

“Farewell! then,” rejoined Bourbon, galloping off in pursuit of the retreating foe.

Scarcely was he gone, than Pescara came up at the head of his battalion. On recognising Bayard,

he hurried towards him, and, dismounting, knelt beside him, expressing his deep concern at his condition.

"This mischance saddens our victory," he said. "You must not die thus. I will send a surgeon to you, and my men shall erect a tent over you."

"No surgeon will avail me, noble marquis, I am sped," rejoined Bayard; "and I need no tent to cover me. I shall sleep soundly enough anon. If you would show me favour, all I ask is this. Should my esquire fall into your hands, I pray you send him to me. And let not my sword be taken from me, but cause it to be delivered to De Lorges, to whom I have bequeathed it."

"It shall be done as you desire. Aught more?"

"Nothing," replied Bayard.

Pescara then placed a guard around the dying hero, and departed full of grief.

Not many minutes afterwards, Bayard's esquire came up and knelt beside his dying master.

The presence of this faithful attendant was a sensible satisfaction to the wounded knight. Since no priest was nigh, he confessed to him. Finding his end approaching, he besought his esquire to hold his sword towards him, and pressing his lips to the hilt, fell back.

So fled the spirit of the fearless and reproachless Bayard.

End of the Third Book.

BOOK IV.



THE SIEGE OF MARSEILLES.

I.

MONCALIERI.

HAD it rested with Bourbon, after the victory of Romagnano he would have followed Bonnivet across the Alps, and invaded France. But the ambitious design was frustrated by the jealousy of Lannoy and Pescara, while Sforza and the other chiefs of the Italian league, perfectly content with the expulsion of the French from Lombardy, declined to engage in a war from which they could derive little advantage, and at once withdrew from the Imperial army.

After pursuing the flying French as far as Susa, Bourbon took the army to Turin, where he was well received by Carlo III., Duke of Savoy. This sovereign, who was nearly related to both the contending powers, being brother-in-law of the Emperor, and uncle to François I., endeavoured, though with imperfect success, to preserve a strict neutrality. He generally inclined towards the winning side, and since at this juncture fortune had declared herself in favour of the Emperor, he veered round in the same direction, and not only allowed the victorious army to encamp near his capital, but gave its leader a most distinguished reception.

Meanwhile, efforts were made by the Pope to bring about peace, and with this view he despatched envoys to Charles V., to François I., and to Henry VIII., proposing a truce for a year, and offering to act as mediator. But the proposition was rejected by the three monarchs. Elated

by the success of his army, the Emperor was bent upon fresh conquests, and felt more disposed to invade France than to make peace with its ruler. Henry VIII. was of the same opinion; while François I., exasperated rather than intimidated by the defeat he had just sustained in the Milanese, peremptorily refused to enter into any treaty in which Bourbon should be included.

In Lannoy and Pescara, as we have intimated, Bourbon had secret enemies, and it was owing to their representations that the invasion of France was delayed. At the instance of the Viceroy of Naples, who had proceeded to Madrid to hold a conference with his Imperial master, Charles V. consented to suspend the execution of his enterprise until the determination of the King of England could be ascertained, and some time elapsed, owing to the intrigues of Wolsey, before Henry VIII. gave his adhesion to the project.

During this long interval, Bourbon remained

at Turin, impatiently awaiting the Emperor's decision.

The Imperial army, which now consisted mainly of Spanish soldiers and German lanz-knechts, with some few Italian and Swiss mercenaries, was encamped at Moncalieri, a charming village situated on the declivity of a hill, forming part of the beautiful Collina di Torino. A princely habitation, belonging to the Duke of Savoy, crowned the summit of the hill, and here Bourbon resided. From the terraces of the palace of Moncalieri a splendid view was commanded of the Alps, of the rich plains of Lombardy traversed by the Po, and of the fair city of Turin. The sides of the hill were covered with vineyards, in the midst of which rose a few flat-roofed habitations, with a church and a campanile.

At the foot of the hill, and extending to the right bank of the river Po, which flowed past it, lay the camp. Its supplies were derived from the numerous villages around it, as well as from the adjacent capital.

Nothing could be more enchanting than the palace of Moncalieri, with its superb saloons, its stately terrace, and exquisite gardens. Yet its delights could not lure Bourbon from the camp, and he spent the greater part of each day in inspecting the troops and practising military manœuvres. His aim was to win the regard of the soldiers, and in this he completely succeeded. They idolised him, as Bayard had been idolised by the French army.

Of late, the Imperial army had been joined by three leaders of distinction, the Marquis del Vasto, the Comte de Hohenzollern, and the Comte de Lodron. The two latter had been appointed by the Emperor to the command of the lanz-knechts. Of the former we must say a few words. Don Alonso Avalos, Marquis del Vasto, was a nephew of the renowned Pescara, and, though barely twenty-one, had already acquired a brilliant military reputation. He deeply regretted that he had

not been a sharer in the campaign which had just terminated so gloriously for the Imperialists in the victory of Romagnano. Bourbon, who felt a genuine admiration for the high military qualities of the young marquis, would fain have attached him to his side, but Del Vasto, influenced by Pescara, held himself haughtily aloof. De Hohenzollern and De Lodron, however, manifested no such jealous feelings.

Though considerably reduced by the withdrawal of the Italian troops, the Imperial army still formed a large force, comprising nineteen thousand foot, eleven hundred lances, and fifteen hundred light horse. Of this force the greater part were experienced soldiers, fond of warfare, and ready for any enterprise.

One morning, in the early part of June, Bourbon took a solitary walk upon the terrace of the palace, occasionally glancing down upon the camp, and noting with interest the movements of the

soldiers. The atmosphere was so soft and balmy, that it might have tranquillised any breast less troubled than his own. But Nature failed to soothe him then. All her charms were displayed in vain. The glorious picture stretched out before him caught his eye, but did not fix his attention. The mighty Alps were unheeded. Unheeded also was Turin, with its Duomo, churches, palaces, and convents, encircled by the Dora and the Po. His thoughts were elsewhere, and his mental gaze was directed towards distant scenes.

He had been some time on the terrace, pacing to and fro, and had just made up his mind to ride down to the camp, when he perceived a party of horsemen ascending the hill. As they came from the direction of Turin, the hope was instantly awakened within his breast that these horsemen might be the long-expected envoys. And so it proved. Presently, a chamberlain came forth and

informed him that the ambassadors from the Emperor and from the King of England had arrived, and besought an immediate audience.

Instantly re-entering the palace, Bourbon proceeded to a cabinet, and caused the ambassadors to be brought into his presence. They were announced as the Comte de Beaurain and Doctor Pace. The latter was a man of middle age, and possessed a handsome countenance, marked by great quickness and intelligence, a tall, commanding figure, and a dignified and courteous manner. He was attired in a gown of black velvet, and wore a close coif of the same material on his head. Long residence in Italy had given him something of the look and manner of a native of the country—a resemblance which was heightened by his dark complexion and dark eyes.

Doctor Pace had studied at Padua under the learned Bombasius, and on his return to his own country, being recommended to Cardinal Bain-

bridge, Archbishop of Canterbury, he accompanied that dignitary to Rome. Subsequently, Doctor Pace was made secretary of state by Henry VIII., and enjoyed in an eminent degree the favour of that capricious monarch. Some few years prior to our history, Pace had been created Dean of Saint Paul's, but he had little opportunity of discharging his ecclesiastical functions, since the chief part of his time was spent abroad. Shortly before Bourbon's defection he had been sent to Venice to negotiate between Charles V. and François I., and his conduct on that occasion established him in the good opinion of his own sovereign. From Venice he proceeded, by Wolsey's directions, to Rome, with the secret object of ensuring the elevation of the ambitious Cardinal to the Papacy. In this he failed, and consequently incurred Wolsey's displeasure. He still, however, retained the king's favour, and was employed by him on the present mission to Bourbon.

Well aware of his distinguished abilities, Bourbon received the English envoy with great consideration, and expressed a lively satisfaction at seeing him as well as the Comte de Beaurain.

"I hope you bring me good tidings, messeigneurs," he said. "But I shall deem nothing good unless you tell me it is agreed that I shall immediately cross the Alps with the army. By Saint Louis! I have tarried here long enough."

"Your highness can scarce complain that you are indifferently lodged," remarked Doctor Pace. "For my own part, I could be content to remain for ever in this delightful palace."

"I will surrender it to you with pleasure," said Bourbon. "But keep me not in suspense. Am I to cross the Alps? Have my royal allies decided to invade France?"

"Such is their determination," replied Beaurain. "And they entrust the command of the enterprise to your highness."

"Thank Heaven for that!" exclaimed Bourbon, joyfully. "Now I can listen patiently to details."

"We have come to propose a new treaty to your highness," pursued Beaurain, "having the same object as the last, which, unfortunately, miscarried—namely, an invasion of France, and a division of the kingdom among the conquerors."

"That is all I desire," replied Bourbon; "but, to ensure entire success, France ought to be simultaneously invaded through Provence, Languedoc, and Picardy. By attacking François at these three points we shall compel him to divide his forces, so that he can offer no effectual resistance. Nevertheless, if it be desired that I should undertake the invasion single-handed, I am ready to do so. Two roads are open to me—one by the Lyonnais, the other by Provence. Lyons is only fortified on one side, and with an adequate force may be easily taken. All the nobles of Dauphiné, Auvergne, and the Bourbonnais will rally round

me. Of that I am well assured. But it will be as easy to reach Lyons through Provence as by Dauphiné. The Duke of Savoy will give me a free passage through his states, and supply the army with necessary provisions. In less than a week I can cross the mountains, and then, skirting the sea, make my way to Provence. The Imperial fleet, under the command of the Admiral Ugo de Monçada, is now in the Mediterranean, and will support me during my march along the coast, and furnish reinforcements in case of need. But I do not think I shall require much help. The castle of Monaco, which, as you are aware, is very strong, and favourably situated for the disembarkation of troops and artillery, will be opened to me by the Bishop of Grasse. From Monaco I will march on along the coast to Marseilles, which I will besiege and take."

"If your highness can take Marseilles, the Emperor will be well content," remarked Beaurain.

“He desires to have a port in Provence, as the King of England has a port in Picardy. With Marseilles, Genoa, and Barcelona, he would have the command of the Mediterranean.”

“His desire shall be gratified,” returned Bourbon. “Marseilles will not long hold out when I appear before it. Three cannon-shot from the heights will bring forth the timorous citizens, key in hand, and cord round the neck—suppliant for mercy, and willing to accept any terms.”

“Your highness makes light of the matter,” observed Beaurain, smiling. “I trust I may be wrong, but I do not think Marseilles will be easily taken. It has been put in a perfect state of defence by Renzo da Ceri, who has been there ever since he surrendered Lodi. The Imperial fleet, under Admiral Monçada, will render you all possible assistance, and will transport your artillery from Genoa to Monaco, but you must not forget that our bitter enemy, Andrea Doria, with his galleys, has

recently joined the French squadron, now cruising in the Mediterranean, and may give us much trouble. Tidings have just reached me that the valiant young Prince of Orange, who had sailed in a brigantine from Barcelóna to Genoa to join our army, has been captured by Doria."

"What do I hear? the Prince of Orange captured!" exclaimed Bourbon. "That is a heavy loss indeed. No braver or better captain than Philibert de Challon can be found. He would have been my right hand in the proposed expedition."

"Are we to understand that your highness agrees to the terms of the new treaty?" demanded Beaurain.

"Let me hear them once more, and you shall have an answer," said the duke.

"First then, as regards your highness," rejoined Beaurain. "It is agreed that, on the conquest of France, if haply such shall be the result of the ex-

pedition, you shall be put in possession, not only of the provinces heretofore belonging to you, and of which you have been unjustly deprived by François I., but of those to which you lay claim—namely, Provence and Dauphiné. And the Emperor undertakes to erect these provinces into a kingdom, of which your highness shall be sovereign.”

“So far good,” said Bourbon, well pleased.

“The remainder of France,” pursued Beaurain, “is to be divided between the Emperor and the King of England.”

“To that I raise no objection,” remarked Bourbon.

“I have now an observation to make,” said Doctor Pace. “It is expressly stipulated by my royal master that he shall assume the title of King of France, to which realm he has all along laid claim, and shall be so recognised by your highness.”

“Henry become King of France!—that cannot be!” cried Bourbon. “The stipulation was proposed to me at Montbrison, and I then refused it.”

“Things have greatly changed since then,” said Pace. “My royal master peremptorily requires that your highness shall swear fidelity to him, and pay him homage as King of France.”

“Were I to take the oath you propose,” rejoined Bourbon, “the Pope would infallibly declare himself against us, and I should alienate all the French nobility, who would shrink from me, and join the hostile standard. If the oath of fealty must be taken, let it be deferred till the conquest has been achieved.”

“It cannot be deferred,” said Doctor Pace. “The king my master is obstinate, as you know. Unless your highness consents, he will assuredly take no part in the invasion.”

“Nay, then, I must yield,” said Bourbon. “But I do so with great reluctance.”

"I do not discern the dangers which your highness seems to apprehend," remarked Beaurain. "After all, it is a small price to pay for a kingdom."

"What assistance will the king render me?" asked Bourbon of the English envoy.

"He will contribute a hundred thousand ducats towards the payment of the army as soon as your highness shall have crossed the Alps," replied Pace, "and thenceforward will continue to furnish a like sum monthly, till the object of the expedition be accomplished. His majesty is making active preparations for a descent upon Picardy, and is sending a prodigious number of soldiers, both horse and foot, to Dover, to be transported thence to Calais, where they will join the Burgundian cavalry and the Flemish lansquenets. When required, this army will march into the heart of France."

"On the part of the Emperor," added Beaurain, "I am empowered to furnish you with two hundred

thousand ducats, to be employed in payment of the arrears due to the troops. The expedition, therefore, can be undertaken without delay."

"I will set forth at once," said Bourbon, joyfully. "Preparations shall be made for our immediate departure. Come with me to the camp. Your presence will be desirable while I lay the plan before the generals."

The party then quitted the cabinet, and, mounting their steeds, rode down the hill to the camp. On arriving there, Bourbon summoned all the principal leaders to his tent, and informed them that an immediate invasion of France had been determined upon. The announcement, which was confirmed by the two ambassadors, was received with enthusiasm by the Counts de Hohenzollern and De Lodron, but very coldly by Pescara and the young Marquis del Vasto.

"Let those go who list," said Pescara, haughtily. "I have no desire to take part in the expedition."

"Neither have I," added Del Vasto.

"I counsel you to think twice ere you withdraw from it, my lords," said Beaurain. "The Emperor will be highly displeased."

"They will scarcely withdraw from an expedition which must infallibly cover them with glory," said Bourbon. "Hear me, marquis," he added to Pescara. "The supreme command of the army rests with me, but as I desire to have the full benefit of your great military skill, I appoint you captain-general of the entire forces."

"Nay, my lord, this is more than I merit," said Pescara.

"Not so, marquis," said Bourbon. "I am rejoiced to be able to evince my sense of your valour and skill. It gratifies me also that I can prove the estimation in which I hold the military talents of your distinguished nephew. Marquis del Vasto," he added, turning to the young nobleman, "I appoint you captain-general of the Spanish forces."

You will be next in command to your renowned uncle."

"I trust I shall not disgrace the appointment, my lord," said Del Vasto, bowing.

"No fear of that," rejoined Bourbon. "And now, messeigneurs," he added to the assemblage, "give heed, I pray you, to what I am about to say. With your aid, and with the aid of the brave army under my command, I will strive to wrest the crown of France from the unworthy monarch who now wears it, and place it on the head of Henry VIII. of England, to whom, in your presence, I solemnly plight fealty and homage."

All bowed as the words were uttered, and immediately afterwards the assemblage broke up.

Orders were then issued by sound of trumpet throughout the camp that the army would march towards France on the morrow.

II.

THE CASTLE OF MONACO.

ACCUSTOMED to active warfare, and delighting in it, the soldiers of the Imperial army were well pleased to learn that they were to start on a fresh expedition, and their satisfaction was by no means diminished when they received their arrears of pay. On all hands, preparations were made for the march. The artillery, which would have greatly impeded the passage of the troops over the Alps, was sent on to Genoa, to be conveyed thence by the Spanish fleet to Monaco.

Next morning, tents were struck, and shortly afterwards the whole of the well-disciplined host was in motion. Bourbon, with the two ambassadors, remained for a day at Turin, to take leave of the Duke of Savoy, and then following the army, overtook it at Cuneo.

The Alps were crossed by the Col di Tenda, and the passage being at that time free from snow, no difficulty was experienced. Making his way by Giandola and Sospello, Bourbon arrived at the little village of Turbia, situated in the mountains, behind Monaco, with his army in excellent condition and in high spirits, on the eighth day after leaving Moncalieri.

A magnificent prospect was offered to the soldiers as they quitted Turbia, where they had halted for the night, and descended towards the coast. Before them lay the whole of that superb bay, extending from Mentone to Cape Sant' Ospizio, in the midst of which stood Monaco, with

its haughty castle. Smooth almost as a mirror on that beautiful summer morning, the blue Mediterranean spread out like a lake, with a few small vessels becalmed in the offing. If Bourbon and his host contemplated this striking picture with admiration, they themselves were regarded with equal interest by the inhabitants of the town of Monaco, and by the soldiers of the garrison. The descent of the army from the mountains formed a very striking spectacle, and as battalion after battalion came in sight, their burnished arms glittering in the sun, the admiration of the beholders rose to enthusiasm.

Situated on a lofty headland jutting into the sea, the Castle of Monaco reared its proud towers as if in defiance of any foe. So strongly was it built, and so well fortified, that it was deemed impregnable. Whether facing sea or land, its battlements bristled with ordnance of formidable size. A lovely bay formed a safe and commodious har-

bour for friendly shipping. Though of no great size, Monaco was the capital of a small sovereignty, and was nominally ruled over by Prince Onorio Grimaldi, the descendant of an illustrious Genoese family. Nominally ruled over, we say, because Onorio was still of tender years, and the government of the petty principality was entrusted to his uncle, the Bishop of Grasse, between whom and Bourbon a very friendly feeling subsisted.

As Bourbon approached Monaco, the Bishop of Grasse, accompanied by his nephew, the young Prince Onorio Grimaldi, a very handsome stripling of some thirteen or fourteen years, came forth with a large attendance of richly-attired esquires and gentlemen to meet him. Courteously greeting the duke, the bishop placed the castle at his disposal, and the young prince gracefully seconded his uncle's proposition.

Bourbon gladly accepted the proffered hospitality, and he and all the principal leaders of the

army were lodged within the castle, and sumptuously entertained. The camp was pitched on the farther side of the Bay of Monaco, about a league from the town.

Nearly a week had elapsed since Bourbon's arrival at Monaco, and no tidings having been heard of the Spanish fleet, which was to bring the artillery from Genoa, he began to fear that some disaster had happened, especially as it was known that Andrea Doria and the French fleet under La Fayette had left Marseilles, and were cruising about in the Mediterranean. However, as for several days a dead calm had prevailed, the slow progress of the ships could be easily accounted for.

At last the wished-for breeze sprang up. The smooth blue expanse became ruffled, and the wind being favourable, the fleet might be speedily expected.

One morning, Bourbon, accompanied by Pescara and Del Vasto, and followed by a troop of two

hundred mounted Spanish arquebusiers, was riding from the Castle of Monaco to the camp, when, perceiving several vessels in the distance, he halted to look at them, feeling sure they must be the expected squadron. He was right in the supposition; but his satisfaction was speedily damped, when it became manifest that the ships were being chased by a hostile fleet far their superior in number, and were making all possible sail to place themselves under the protection of the guns of the Castle of Monaco. But it was doubtful whether they could accomplish their object. Clearly they were pursued by Andrea Doria, and in him, as Bourbon and Pescara well knew, they had to deal with one of the most resolute and skilful naval captains of the age.

For a short time, the ships on either side, pursued and pursuers, seemed to maintain their relative distances, being more than half a league apart, and a strong hope was felt by the beholders that the

former would escape. But this impression was shaken when it became manifest that the French were gaining upon the fugitives, the still freshening breeze aiding their efforts.

It was with indescribable rage and mortification that Bourbon witnessed this scene. Though he felt that Monçada was unable to cope successfully with a fleet greatly superior to his own in number, and that he therefore acted prudently in avoiding an engagement which might probably result in his own discomfiture, and in the loss of the artillery and stores he was bringing for the Imperial army, Bourbon could not constrain himself, but gave loud utterance to his wrath, and Pescara was scarcely less indignant.

The foremost of the French fleet had now got so much nearer the Spaniards, that deeming they were within range they fired a few guns at the latter, but the shots fell short, and the discharge was not replied to by the fugitives, who pressed on

as swiftly as they could. All the ships were now dashing quickly through the waves, and the chase was watched with the keenest interest, not only by Bourbon and those with him, but by hundreds of spectators collected on the walls of the city, along the harbour, and on the battlements of the castle.

On the towers and ramparts the cannoniers were at their post, match in hand, and with shotted guns, ready to fire upon the French fleet should they venture within range.

The chase had now reached its highest point of excitement, and in a few minutes more the fate of the Spanish fleet must be decided. More guns were fired at them by the foe, but though some of the shots struck, little mischief was done, and the fugitives still held on their way. The French, however, continued to gain upon them, and so critical had become their position, that Bourbon, and almost all the others who looked on, had given them up for lost, when, contrary to all expectation,

their escape was ensured by a manœuvre of Doria, whose galley, as could be discerned from the broad flag floating at its stern, was foremost in pursuit.

Having come up with the fleet, Doria dashed among them, and turning three galleys out of their course, got between them and Monaco. Feeling sure that these luckless galleys would be captured, Doria directed his attention to the other ships, and poured a broadside into the vessel nearest him. But he failed to disable her, and with her companions she got safe under the castle guns, which were instantly opened upon her pursuer with such effect as to check his further advance. Ere many minutes more the Spanish fleet, which had sustained little damage, entered the harbour amid the shouts and congratulations of the beholders, while the hostile squadron was kept aloof by the guns of the fortress.

Meanwhile, the three galleys intercepted by Doria did their best to escape, and giving up all

idea of gaining the harbour, made for the nearest point that could be reached. This was on the farther side of the bay, near Roccabruna, and too far off to be protected by the castle guns. Though closely pursued by the French fleet, the three galleys were here run ashore, and abandoned by their officers and crews.

Bourbon was infuriated at the sight.

“It were a shame and dishonour to the Emperor, as well as a grievous loss to the army, if those galleys should fall into the hands of the enemy!” he exclaimed. “Their capture must be prevented. Come with me. Not a moment must be lost.”

Followed by Pescara and Del Vasto and the troop of arquebusiers, Bourbon galloped as fast as his charger could carry him towards the spot where the galleys had been run ashore. It was not far distant, and he reached it before the boats sent by Doria to take possession of their prizes could come

up. Instantly dismounting, he ordered a third of the arquebusiers to follow him, and springing on board the most exposed of the galleys, prepared for its defence. His example was followed by Pescara and Del Vasto, each of whom took possession of a galley, accompanied by a party of arquebusiers.

Ere long an attempt was made by three large boats, each containing twenty well-armed men, to seize the galley on which Bourbon was stationed; but so murderous was the fire of the arquebusiers, and such havoc was made by Bourbon himself, that, after sustaining heavy loss, the assailants were compelled to desist. An equally gallant resistance was made by Pescara and Del Vasto, and after a sharp conflict, which endured for nearly an hour, several boats were sunk and the others driven off, with the loss of the greater part of their crews.

During this conflict, the French fleet had not used their guns, fearing to injure their own men, but as soon as the boats moved off they opened

fire. However, they failed to dislodge Bourbon and the other generals, and at last, finding the attempt to capture the galleys hopeless, Doria and La Fayette sailed off.

III.

HOW BOURBON WAS PROCLAIMED COMTE DE PROVENCE.

OWING to this bold achievement, Bourbon lost none of his artillery and stores, and quitting Monaco, where he had sojourned for nearly three weeks, commenced his march along the coast. He was still accompanied by the Comte de Beaurain and Doctor Pace. The route now taken by the army offered enchanting views of the Mediterranean. Gigantic aloes, cactuses, and pomegranates, skirted the road. Orange-groves, vineyards, and well-stocked orchards, everywhere delighted the eye.

magnano. Neither did they shrink from the present expedition. The period had not arrived when their leader could fully requite their devotion, but he hoped ere long to do so. Let us also mention that Bourbon still retained in his service the faithful Hugues.

"I see whither your gaze is directed, my lord, and can guess the thoughts that occupy your mind," remarked Pomperant, as he rode up. "'Tis a lovely region, that of Provence—an earthly paradise—and it will pain François to lose it."

"Yet he makes not an effort to check the invasion," remarked Bourbon. "There is no army to oppose our progress. The conquest will be too easy. By-and-by I will rouse him from his dreams of pleasure, and force him to give me battle. But let us on. I am impatient to set foot in France."

After halting at the charming city of Nice, and crossing the headlong Var, Bourbon entered Provence with his army. His progress was wholly

unimpeded. Marching on through a delightful district to Antibes, he took possession of that little seaport, and proceeded to Grasse.

As he advanced, the country seemed to increase in beauty. The hills were clothed with groves of ilex, arbutus, and myrtle, and the cork-tree flourished in more exposed places. Aloes and cactuses fringed the shore, and olives and vines, figs and mulberries, struggled for mastery on the plains.

Bourbon prevented his army from committing any kind of excess, and though the purpose of his invasion was well understood, the peasants and the inhabitants of the towns did not fly at his approach, but received him joyfully. From Grasse he proceeded to Cannes, with its beautiful bay, and the lovely group of islands, with fort, convent, and church, that face it.

Again marching along a coast of almost unrivalled beauty, and boasting an aqueduct and many other Roman remains, he reached Frejus, and then

turning inland, summoned the important town of Draguignan to surrender. The mandate was instantly obeyed, and he entered the town without striking a blow, and was received with all honour by the authorities.

Having taken Hyères, Brignolles, and Tourves, he pursued his march towards Aix, the ancient capital of Provence, and renowned for its fêtes and tournaments in the days of Raimond Beranger and the good René d'Anjou.

As Aix was occupied by a considerable force under the Maréchal de la Palisse, it might have been thought that he would here experience a check, especially as the ancient city was strongly fortified; but as he advanced towards it from Trets, whence he had despatched Pomperant with a guard to summon it to surrender, La Palisse, unwilling to hazard a siege, withdrew his forces, and retired to Avignon.

When Bourbon, therefore, came within a couple

of leagues of the capital of Provence, he encountered a large band of citizens, who had come thus far to meet him. At the head of the troop were the Sire de Prat, viguier, or provost of the city, and all the chief magistrates.

Dismounting from their steeds, these important personages, who were attired in their robes of office, bent the knee humbly before Bourbon, and the viguier presented him with the keys of the city.

Bourbon received their submission very graciously, assured them that their city should be respected, and that he came as a liberator and not as an oppressor. This welcome announcement was received with acclamations by the troop of citizens, who shouted loudly, "Vive Bourbon!"

Attended by the viguier and the magistrates, Bourbon rode on through plantations of almond-trees, olive-groves, and vineyards, to the beautiful city of Aix.

As he approached, the bells were rung joyously,

peals of ordnance were fired from the walls, and from the gates, which were thrown wide open, issued crowds to give him welcome.

Bourbon, of course, took possession of the city, and placed a strong force in its garrison, and on its towers and fortifications, but the army was encamped outside the walls.

Next day, mass was celebrated in the noble old cathedral of Saint Sauveur, at which Bourbon, Pescara, and all the other generals, with the two ambassadors, assisted. The duke then proceeded to the ancient palace of King René, and, in the presence of the viguier and the magistrates, assumed the title of Comte de Provence, and received their homage.

Proclamation of the title was subsequently made by sound of trumpet in all the principal places of the city, and the announcement was received with enthusiastic cries of "Vive Bourbon! Vive le Comte de Provence!"

For three days great rejoicings were held in Aix, and the good old times of Raimond Beranger and King René seemed to be revived. Banquets and fêtes were given in the palace in honour of the new Comte de Provence. Jousts and floral games were held in a plain outside the walls, at which the fair dames of Aix assisted. Troubadours sang their lays; and merry dances were executed by sprightly youths and dark-eyed damsels. In all the neighbouring villages there was revelry and rejoicing—

Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth.

IV.

SHOWING HOW MARSEILLES WAS FORTIFIED.

BOURBON was still 'at Aix, when a messenger arrived from Charles V. enjoining him to lay immediate siege to Marseilles. Thus compelled to forego his design of marching upon Lyons, he summoned a council of the leaders of the army, and acquainted them with the message he had just received from the Emperor. "I once affirmed to the Comte de Beaurain," he said, "that three cannon-shot would suffice to bring the citizens of Marseilles to my feet. But I have seen cause to

change my opinion. The Seigneurs Pomperant and Lurey have examined the city carefully, and they report that its defences are exceedingly strong, and are rapidly being augmented by Renzo da Ceri and Chabot de Brion, to whom the command of the garrison has been entrusted. Aided by the chief commissary, Mirandel, Renzo da Ceri has made immense preparations for the defence. Two convents and three churches, which might have assisted the assault, have been pulled down; and the faubourgs and all the pleasure-houses built outside the city on the east and north have likewise been levelled."

"And do the inhabitants second these efforts?" demanded Pescara. "If so, they resemble not the good citizens of Aix, who have declared themselves so heartily in our favour."

"The citizens of Marseilles are determinately hostile both to the Emperor and myself, and have vowed to burn the place rather than surrender

it," replied Bourbon. "They boast of their attachment to the crown of France, though Provence has only been forty years annexed to the kingdom. The whole population, it appears, assisted in the demolition of the convents, churches, and bastides, and they all seem animated by a spirit of patriotic enthusiasm. I have not been able to ascertain the precise strength of the garrison, but I know it amounts to full four thousand men, a fourth of which consists of cavalry, and the rest of foot soldiers. Renzo da Ceri brought all his best men-at-arms from Lodi, and Chabot de Brion was accompanied by three hundred arquebusiers. In addition to these, eight thousand of the citizens, inflamed by patriotic ardour, have formed themselves into train-bands. Thus you see what we have to expect. The defenders of Marseilles are well supplied with artillery and munitions of war, and possess some cannon of large size. As to supplies, they can easily obtain them, since the port is

defended by the French fleet under Doria and La Fayette. Notwithstanding all these obstacles, I make no doubt we shall speedily reduce the city. To-morrow I will go and reconnoitre it, and I will pray you, my lords," he added to Pescara and Del Vasto, "to accompany me. We will take a sufficient force with us, and the main body of the army will follow."

This plan being agreed upon, the council broke up.

Next morning Bourbon, at the head of two thousand Spanish soldiers, attended by Pescara and Del Vasto, together with Pomperant and Lurcy, quitted Aix and proceeded towards Marseille.

Night had fallen as the generals drew near the beautiful city they intended to besiege, and quitting their escort, they mounted to the summit of the steep rocky hill, called the Montagne de la Vierge-de-la-Garde, crowned by a small chapel de-

icated to the Blessed Virgin. A full moon shed down her radiance on the city, enabling them to survey it almost as perfectly as by daylight.

To those unacquainted with Marseilles, it may be proper to mention that it is surrounded by hills, which rise behind it in the form of an amphitheatre. A large natural basin, capable of holding a vast number of ships of the largest size, and from its position perfectly sheltered, forms the harbour, the entrance being so narrow, that, at the period of our history, it was secured by a thick chain, suspended from rock to rock. Further protection was afforded by the guns of the Castle of Saint Jean, placed on a rock on the north of the harbour. Outside is a small group of islands, on one of which stood a fort. Between these islands and the harbour lay the French fleet.

Very beautiful was the appearance of the city on that bright moonlight night—the vine-clad hills—the old walls and towers encircling the quaint

houses—the noble basin with its shipping—the rocks so nearly approaching each other that they seemed almost to shut in the harbour—the group of islands outside, with the fleet at anchor near them—the beautiful curves of the coast—the wide expanse of the sea glittering like silver—all formed a ravishing picture. But the attention of those who gazed upon it was solely directed to the defences of the city, and to the discovery of its weak points. They saw where the churches and convents had been demolished by Mirandel, and where the faubourgs and bastides had been pulled down, and acknowledged the wisdom of the proceeding. They also perceived to what extent the walls and fortifications had been strengthened, and the moat widened by Renzo da Ceri.

Little is left of the Marseilles of the sixteenth century. The boast and pride of the existing city, the unequalled Rue de la Cannebière, was then un-built, and its site was little better than a marsh.

The ancient city was defended on the land side by high walls, flanked by bastions, and garnished with eight towers, the chief of which, called the Tower of Saint Paul, protected the Porte de la Joliette. The walls were surrounded by a wide deep ditch, supplied from the sea, and the gates were approached by drawbridges. All the more exposed of these gates were now filled up with masonry, and the others rendered unassailable by external and internal works. Towers, bastions, and battlements, bristled with ordnance. On a mound in the midst of the city, crowned by three windmills, cannon of large size were placed. Cannon also had been hoisted on the steeple of the Cathedral de la Major, on a tower constructed on the hill overlooking the city on the north, and on the clock-tower near the fountains of the Accoules.

All these formidable preparations were carefully noted by Bourbon and Pescara, who consumed the

whole night in the inspection. Both agreed that if those in command were vigorously seconded by the inhabitants, the city might hold out for a long period.

The result of the examination of the defences was that they were least strong at an angle where the ramparts were flanked by the old tower of Saint Paul, which did not appear in very good condition, while within the walls stood the palace of the Bishop of Marseilles and the old church of Saint Cannat. It was towards this weak point, which occupied a space of some thousand yards, that Bourbon resolved to direct the main attack.

Dawn was at hand by the time the two generals had completed their survey. Just then the sudden and violent ringing of alarm-bells from tower and steeple, followed by the sound of trumpet and drum, proclaimed that the guardians of the city had become aware that the foe was at hand.

Heedless of these sounds, Bourbon and Pescara,

and those with them, remained on the heights until a sortie was made from the Porte d'Aix by a large force of cavalry, numbering about fifteen hundred men, and headed by Renzo da Ceri. They then descended to their escort, whom they had left on the farther side of the hill on the road from Aix.

When Renzo da Ceri came in sight of Bourbon and his troop, and found that the force was greater than his own, he hesitated to make the attack, and eventually galloped back to the city.

He was hotly pursued by Bourbon and Pescara, who, despite the cannonade directed against them from the towers, bastions, and battlements, followed him to the gate whence he had issued, and only withdrew because the drawbridge was raised.

V.

IN WHAT MANNER POMPERANT ENTERED MARSEILLES.

TWO days afterwards Marseilles was invested by Bourbon. The main body of the Imperial army occupied the heights overlooking the city from east to west. The lanz-knechts, under the Counts de Hohenzollern and De Lodron, were placed near the shore, and a division of the Spanish infantry, under Del Vasto, was stationed on the plain of Saint Michel, on the road to Aubagne.

On the side of a hill on the north, about four hundred toises from the walls, stood the chapel

and hospital of Saint Lazare, and it was under their shelter that Bourbon and Pescara fixed their tents. From this point operations were commenced against the beleaguered city, and trenches opened in the direction of that part of the walls which had been judged to be weakest. The pioneers laboured during the night, and were protected by gabions and mantelets, but they suffered severely from the fire of the besieged. Frequent sorties were made by Renzo da Ceri, and many a bloody conflict took place near the trenches; but these engagements uniformly resulted in the discomfiture of the besieged, and consequently the works advanced slowly but steadily.

At length Bourbon had drawn sufficiently near to use his artillery with effect, and having erected his batteries, he opened a tremendous fire upon the portion of the walls extending from the Porte d'Aix to an old Franciscan convent. The besieged immediately replied, and every cannon

garnishing the ramparts, bastions, and towers that could be rendered available against the assailants was brought into play. Even a monstrous piece of ordnance, appropriately enough called "The Basilisk," thundered from the hill surmounted by the clock-tower. This huge cannon, supposed to be the largest then fabricated, projected shot of a hundred-weight, and required sixty men to replace it after each discharge. But its unwieldy size prevented good aim from being taken, and the ponderous shot, discharged at long intervals, could be easily avoided. The smaller guns, however, were better served and directed, and caused considerable destruction among the assailants. Ere many hours, however, a breach had been made in the walls, but Bourbon hesitated to order an immediate assault, deeming the aperture not wide enough.

"I would it were possible to obtain exact information of the state of the city," he remarked to Pomperant, as he entered his tent with the latter.

"Leave that to me, my lord," said Pomperant.

"I will bring you the information you require."

"You!" exclaimed Bourbon, in surprise. "How will you get into the city?"

"The task is not easy, I admit," replied Pomperant. "I do not mean to swim across the moat, and attempt to scale the walls in the face of the arquebusiers, but I think I can manage to enter the city from the sea-side, where it is less guarded."

"But to do this you must escape the fleet—elude the vigilance of the sentinels on the walls of the Château de Saint Jean—and lastly, you must raise the chain that protects the entrance to the harbour. It cannot be done. It were easier to penetrate the city by the breach made by my guns."

"Difficult as the task may be, I am ready to undertake it," rejoined Pomperant.

"Will you go alone?"

"No; I will take Hugues with me. I can trust him."

Bourbon did not attempt to dissuade him, and at nightfall Pomperant, attended by Hugues, started on the expedition, and rode to that part of the coast where the German lanz-knechts were encamped. The night was dark and favourable for the enterprise. As he was accompanied by the Comte de Hohenzollern and a guard, no interruption was offered him by the sentinels stationed at various points, and he soon reached the shore, and proceeded to a little creek in which a fishing-boat was moored.

Instantly dismounting, and consigning his horse to one of De Hohenzollern's soldiers, Pomperant embarked in the boat with Hugues, who took the oars and rowed cautiously along the coast, making for a rocky headland, which screened the entrance of the harbour.

In a few minutes the boat had got under cover of the rock, and escaped the notice of the sentinels stationed on the ramparts of the fort above. No

wind was stirring, and only a slight undulation was perceptible on the surface of the tideless sea.

While Hugues kept the little vessel moving, Pomperant, who was seated in the stern, peered through the gloom to see whether any danger was at hand. He could just discern the French fleet lying between the group of islands and the mouth of the harbour, and concluded from the sounds that reached him that several boats were leaving the ships. At once determining on the course to be pursued, he ordered Hugues to move noiselessly on, and keep close to the rock until he gained the entrance of the harbour. This was done, and ere long the boats, upwards of a dozen in number, came up. They were filled with armed men, doubtless sent by Doria or La Fayette to strengthen the garrison of the city.

As soon as the boats had passed, Hugues followed in their wake, and speeded between the rocky heights guarding the narrow channel. The

boats were of course challenged by the sentinels stationed on the forts on either side, but the answers being satisfactory, they were allowed to pass. Hugues also passed without exciting suspicion.

It has already been mentioned that a heavy chain was drawn across the mouth of the harbour, and a short delay occurred while this obstacle was removed. Several men were standing with torches on the rocky steps aiding those who were engaged in lowering the ponderous chain, while higher up stood a guard of arquebusiers.

At length, the chain being dropped and the passage free, the throng of boats pushed into the harbour, and close behind them came Hugues, hoping in the confusion to elude observation. But the manœuvre, though skilfully managed, did not escape detection. The torchlight revealed the intruders, and an authoritative voice from the steps called out,

“Hola! who goes there? What boat is that? Stay, and give an account of yourselves.”

Hugues paid no attention to the summons, which was reiterated by other voices, but hurrying on more rapidly than before, contrived to place some of the other boats between him and the arquebusiers, so that the latter could not fire, and in another minute he had disappeared in the gloom. Luckily, the soldiers in the boats, though they heard the shouts, disregarded them, and pursued their course without stopping.

As soon as it was practicable, Hugues disengaged himself from his dangerous companions, and while they made their way to a wharf on the left of the basin, he struck across to the opposite side, where a landing was effected without molestation. At this time the harbour was entirely destitute of ships, as any vessels lying there would, of course, have been exposed to the guns of the hostile batteries. Hence the wharf at which Pomperant

and Hugues landed was wholly deserted. In fact, there were very few buildings near the spot, for the city had not as yet extended to this side of the harbour.

The walls, however, which surrounded the basin were not far off, but the place was gloomy, and the attention of the sentinels was elsewhere directed. After securing the boat to the wharf, Pomperant and Hugues made their way as quickly as they could round the head of the basin, which, as we have before stated, was then little better than a swamp, and, reaching the city, plunged into a narrow street communicating with the principal quay.

Just as they had entered this street, which was only lighted by an occasional lantern hung before a door, the sound of martial footsteps warned them that a patrol was approaching, and fearing they might be stopped and questioned, they withdrew into an archway till the guard had passed by.

They then pursued their way along the street, which gradually mounted a hill, until they came to an open space, in the midst of which a troop of cavalry was drawn up. This band was surrounded by a crowd of citizens, some of whom carried torches, and in its leader, who was arrayed in a complete suit of armour, but whose beaver was raised, Pomperant instantly recognised the stern dark countenance of Renzo da Ceri. He was haranguing the assemblage, and Pomperant, closely followed by Hugues, mingled with the crowd to hear what he said.

“Be of good cheer, my friends,” he cried. “The danger is past. In a few hours the breach will be repaired, and the measures I have taken for the defence of the city are so complete that we may laugh at the threats of the foe. The traitor Bourbon boasted that he would be master of the city this night, and it is well for you that he did not dare to make good his threat.”

The mention of Bourbon's name was received with a perfect storm of yells and execrations, and when this had subsided Renzo went on.

"We have an enemy who will show us no mercy," he said. "Were he to take the city, it would be sacked by his soldiery."

"That is false!" shouted Pomperant.

"Who spoke?" demanded Renzo, fiercely. "Let him show himself, that I may see who dares gainsay my assertion."

There was a moment's pause, during which glances were turned in the direction of the imprudent speaker, but he could not be discovered.

"Whoever uttered those words must be a friend of Bourbon," pursued Renzo. "I repeat, that it is the traitor's intention to deliver this city to his savage host, and I therefore exhort you to fight to the last in defence of those dear to you. Save your wives and daughters from dishonour. None will be spared."

"Again I say it is false!" vociferated Pomperant.

"Seize the traitor, and bring him before me," roared Renzo.

An attempt was made to obey the injunction. Several persons were seized, and, amid the confusion that prevailed, Pomperant and Hugues extricated themselves from the throng, and passed into a side-street, just as dark and narrow as that they had recently traversed. From the noise and shouts which reached them, it was clear the assemblage had just broken up, and presently Renzo, with his mounted guard, rode down the street, followed by a number of men, evidently part of the assemblage who had been listening to his harangue.

Pomperant and Hugues allowed themselves to be borne on by the stream, and at length issued forth into a wide esplanade ornamented with plane-trees, which here intervened between the city and

the walls. On the left of this open space, and within a short distance of the ramparts, stood the bishop's palace, a large and monastic-looking structure. Close beside it was the venerable church of Saint Cannat. The palace and the church were the only two buildings near this angle of the walls, and it was quite evident to Pomperant that if Bourbon could once obtain possession of them, the city must fall. The marvel was, that experienced engineers like Renzo da Ceri and Chabot de Brion should allow them to remain. Close to the walls where the breach had been made a large body of lansquenets were collected, and with them was a band of armed citizens. The ramparts also were thronged with arquebusiers, and the canonniere remained standing near their guns.

Within a few yards of the breach a battery had been reared, on which three large cannon were planted, ready for service in case the assault should be made. But already the repairs were more than

half accomplished. The gap was filled up with huge stones, pieces of timber, fascines, and other matters, and banked up with earth. A hundred men at a time were engaged on the operations, and a hundred others stood by ready to relieve them, so there was no pause. Officers were stationed on the walls on either side of the breach, giving orders and superintending the work.

After watching the proceedings for some time with an interest such as a soldier only can feel, and satisfying himself that the breach would infallibly be repaired before daybreak, Pomperant moved away. Following the course of the walls, he examined them as well as he could in the gloom.

Proceeding in this manner, he made the circuit of the city; and the result of his scrutiny was, that it was in a perfect state of defence. He remarked that the gates exposed to attack were blocked up, and protected on the inside by para-

pets and batteries. He also noticed that all the ramparts were garnished with cannon, and that the sentinels everywhere were doubled. The bastions, indeed, were thronged with armed men, and it was evident that the whole garrison was on the alert. Officers, accompanied by a mounted guard, were continually riding from gate to gate, while others made their round on the battlements to see that good watch was kept. Patrols, both horse and foot, were likewise moving about in every direction. Enough was seen by Pomperant to convince him that a most energetic defence would be made, and that it would be long before the place could be taken.

Having completed his examination of the walls, he re-entered the city, and shaped his course, as well as he could, in the direction of the mound, on the summit of which stood the clock-tower. As both he and Hugues were unacquainted with Marseilles, they more than once lost their way; and

though there were plenty of people abroad they did not dare to question them, lest it should be found out that they were strangers. Pomperant had begun to despair of reaching the mound, when he unexpectedly came upon it.

VI.

"THE BASILISK."

DAWN was now at hand, and by the time Pomperant and his attendant had climbed the summit of the mound it had become quite light.

Very striking was the view presented from this eminence. Pomperant had stationed himself on a point of the hill not far from the battery, whereon was placed the monstrous cannon called "The Basilisk," of which mention has previously been made; and he and his companion were screened from the observation of the artillerymen by the clock-tower.

Immediately beneath him lay the city of Marseilles, with its picturesque habitations, its noble mansions, convents, and churches, encircled by fortifications, which in their turn were encircled by a broad, deep moat. On the right lay the harbour, almost enclosed by rocks; and Pomperant looked with interest at the narrow inlet by which he had gained admittance overnight. Outside, and near the islands, lay the French fleet; while far as the eye could range spread out the placid sea, now tinged with the roseate hues of morning.

The heights surrounding the city were crowned with the camp of the besieging army. At that still hour the trumpets were heard sounding a *réveillé*, and the men could be distinguished mustering at the call. The German *lanz-knechts* were concealed from view by the intervening hills, but the division of the Spanish troops under Del Vasto were in sight. The hills seemed peopled with armed men, and the rays of the sun were reflected

upon thousands of steel caps and corslets, and upon forests of pikes and lances.

Though Bourbon's tent was concealed from view, its position was marked by the proud banner floating above the walls of the little chapel of Saint Lazare. Pescara's tent was likewise hidden by the sacred edifice, but his banner was as conspicuous as that of Bourbon. The course of the trenches, which advanced in zig-zags towards the walls, could be readily traced. The men were at the battery, waiting orders to open fire. From the battery Pomperant naturally turned to the ramparts which it faced, and he saw that the breach had been completely repaired, and was defended by a parapet, behind which cannon were planted. The work was a marvel of industry, and showed the spirit that animated the besieged.

If all were thus early astir in the camp of the Imperial army; if the men were mustering and preparing for action; if the artillerymen were at

their posts at the various batteries, and both horse and foot in readiness—so also were the besieged. Bastions, ramparts, and towers were thronged with soldiers. A troop of cavalry, commanded by Chabot de Brion, was drawn up near the bishop's palace. Close beside them was a company of pikemen. Detachments of horse and foot were likewise stationed near the Porte d'Aix, and all the other gates not blocked up. In short, every possible preparation for energetic defence was made.

As yet not a gun had been fired by the besiegers, and Pomperant waited with breathless impatience for the commencement of hostilities. There was something ominous in the silence that now prevailed. All the martial sounds recently saluting the ear had ceased. Drums and trumpets were mute. The stillness was undisturbed, for the morning was calm, and the numerous banners on walls and towers hung motionless.

After running his eye along the ramparts,

crowded with arquebusiers and pikemen, Pomperant once more turned his gaze towards the little chapel on the hill-side. At that moment came forth a troop of knights, sheathed in polished armour. At their head rode Bourbon and Pescara, both distinguishable, even at that distance, from the splendour of their accoutrements and the rich housings of their steeds. Each had a short battle-axe at his saddle-bow—each carried a bâton, in token of command. As the knightly troop rode slowly down the hill towards the battery, its movements were watched with keenest interest by thousands of soldiers from the ramparts and towers of the city. Still, not a gun was fired.

At this moment, Pomperant, whose attention had been for some time diverted by other objects from the battery near which he stood, was reminded of its proximity by a bustle among the artillerymen who had charge of the monster cannon, and, looking in that direction, he saw they were about to

fire; and the match being applied, he was almost stunned by the tremendous detonation that ensued.

The sound was echoed from the heights, and reverberated like thunder from the rocks near the harbour. The course of the huge shot could be distinctly traced, and was watched by thousands of eyes. Bourbon and Pescara, with their knightly retinue, had been the mark against which "The Basilisk" was pointed. But the ball passed over the heads of the troop, without causing them to swerve from their course, and fell on the farther side of the lazar-house.

Ineffectual as this discharge proved, it served as the signal for commencing the day's work. The battery at the head of the trenches immediately opened fire, and was replied to from the ramparts and bastions of the city, and the stillness of the lovely morning was broken by the incessant roar of artillery, and the balmy air filled with clouds of sulphurous smoke.

It was some time before "The Basilisk" could be restored to its place, and more than half a hundred men were required for the task; but their labour was quite thrown away, for the second shot was no better aimed than the first—and, indeed, alarmed the besiegers, for it fell into the moat.

Meantime, the roar of ordnance was uninterrupted, and Pomperant looked curiously at the walls; but though some destruction was caused among the defenders, little damage was done to the ramparts.

The conflict had endured for more than an hour, during which Pomperant, enchained by the exciting spectacle, had remained on the same spot, when the sound of a trumpet called his attention to the Porte d'Aix, and he perceived that a large troop of cavalry had been collected at this point. The leader of this troop was Chabot de Brion, who was fully armed, and mounted on a powerful charger. Pomperant at once comprehended that

a sortie was about to be made by the commander of the garrison.

In another minute the gate was thrown open, the drawbridge lowered, and Brion dashed out at the head of his men, and, sword in hand, galloped up the hill towards the battery. But ere he got half way thither he was encountered by Bourbon, who had just been joined by a detachment of horse, and a sharp conflict ensued, resulting in the defeat of Brion and his party, who were driven back, with considerable loss, to the city. So hard pressed were the fugitives, that, although their leader escaped, several officers were captured.

During this skirmish, which seemed like an interlude in the terrible drama, the cannonading went on as furiously as ever.

No other incident occurred to relieve the monotony of the siege, and, satisfied that little impression would be made upon the walls, Pomperant quitted the mound, and went in search

of some house of entertainment where he might break his fast. He was not long in discovering a tavern; but it was not without some trepidation that he entered it.

VII.

THE AMAZONS.

SOME cold viands, flanked by a bottle of good wine, were soon set before him by the tavern-keeper, who talked about the siege, and seemed full of uneasiness lest the city should be taken.

"I am told that Bourbon means to allow three days' pillage to his soldiers if he takes the city," he remarked; "and as to the poor women, not even the holy sisters will be respected."

"You alarm yourself without reason, my good host," said Pomperant. "The city will not be sacked, and no outrages will be committed."

"How know you that?" demanded the tavern-keeper, staring at him in surprise.

"Because such severities would be wholly inconsistent with Bourbon's previous conduct," returned Pomperant. "Ever since he has been in Provence he has checked all licence on the part of the soldiery. Only those who resist will be slaughtered."

"Then I shan't be one of them. I wish this city had surrendered like Aix. Folks may talk as they please about patriotism and loyalty, and so forth, but I don't like fighting. Ever since the siege began I haven't been able to sleep in my bed. So you don't believe Bourbon to be the bloodthirsty monster he is represented, eh?"

"On the contrary, I am persuaded he would offer very advantageous terms to the garrison if they would surrender," said Pomperant.

"Why don't they surrender?" groaned the host. "Don't betray me, sir," he hastened to

add. "Renzo da Ceri would hang me if he heard I had expressed such an unpatriotic sentiment."

"Fear nothing, my good fellow," said Pomperant, laughing. "I am quite as unpatriotic as yourself, for I concur with you in opinion. I belong to Andrew Doria's fleet, and only landed last night, so I don't know much about the state of the city. Answer me frankly. How long do you think it can hold out?"

"Perhaps a month—perhaps longer. They say it can hold out till the king comes to relieve it."

"But if the king shouldn't come—what then?" remarked Pomperant.

"Nay, then we *must* yield. But we shall have some dreadful fighting. When women turn soldiers, it looks as if mischief were meant."

"Women turn soldiers! What mean you, my good host?" inquired Pomperant.

"I mean what I say," replied the tavern-keeper. "Some of the noblest dames of Marseilles have

formed themselves into a military corps, and have determined, if called upon, to fight the foe. The lady who commands this company of Amazons is young and beautiful. Mademoiselle Marphise—for so is she named—is the daughter of M. de Vaudreuil, one of our richest merchants. The second in command is likewise young and beautiful, and quite as high-spirited as Marphise. Her name is Marcelline d'Herment."

"Marcelline d'Herment! Impossible!" cried Pomperant. "Why, if I am not misinformed, her brother, the Seigneur d'Herment, assisted the Constable de Bourbon in his flight."

"Very true," replied the host. "But Marphise has great influence over her, and has caused her to change her opinions. Whatever she may have been before, Mademoiselle Marcelline is now violently opposed to the Duke de Bourbon. She is staying with M. de Vaudreuil, and she and Marphise are inseparable. Their tastes are too mas-

culine for me. They are marching about all day long. If you go to the Esplanade de la Tourette, or the Place de Linche, you cannot fail to see them exercising their corps. Some folks think it a very pretty sight."

"I should like to see them," said Pomperant. "I will go at once to the Esplanade de la Tourette."

"You are more likely to find them in the Place de Linche at this hour," said the host. "Pursue this street, and you will come to it."

Pomperant then paid his reckoning, and, quitting the inn with Hugues, went in the direction indicated by the tavern-keeper.

The Place de Linche, a large square, in which there was an agreeable promenade shaded by plane-trees, was now almost wholly deserted, most of the inhabitants having gone to points whence they could witness the progress of the siege, and only a few old people and children were to be seen.

Pomperant was about to depart, when the sound of military music, proceeding from a street on the opposite side, arrested him, and immediately afterwards the corps of Amazons marched into the square.

At the head of this company rode a damsel who might have been taken as a representative of Hippolita, or Thalestris, or any other Amazonian queen. Of unusually large stature, she was still admirably proportioned, and her features were rigorously classical in outline. She was armed in a glittering corslet, and her casque was surmounted with white and red plumes. In her hand she carried a javelin, and a small shield hung at her saddle-bow.

Though it could not be denied that Marphise was handsome, her expression and bearing were too masculine to be altogether pleasing. The rest of the corps, which numbered about three hundred, were on foot, and as the majority of them

were young, and possessed of considerable personal attractions, they formed a very striking appearance. They were all arrayed in burnished breastplates, and had plumed helmets on their heads, and javelins in their hands. Some of these damsels, as their cast of countenance proclaimed, were of Catalonian origin. They marched six abreast, with light quick footsteps, and in good order, towards the centre of the square, where they formed in line. The second in command was Marcelline. Her accoutrements were precisely like those of the rest of the corps, but she was armed with a drawn sword instead of a javelin.

Nearly an hour was spent by the troop in the practice of various military exercises, all of which were very cleverly performed, and during the whole of that time Pomperant and Hugues remained standing by, screened from observation by the trees.

The practice being ended, the troop formed in

order of march, and began to move off the ground, taking a direction which brought them close to the spot where Pomperant was stationed with Hugues. He might have easily retired, but instead of doing so he made a sign to attract Marcelline's attention, and on beholding him she uttered a cry of surprise. The exclamation reached the ears of Marphise, who was riding in front of her, and, looking round, she was struck with the other's agitation, and inquired the cause. Marcelline made no reply ; but as she looked very faint, the Amazonian leader immediately ordered a halt.

"What ails you?" she said to Marcelline.

"It is nothing—it will pass," replied the other.

"Leave me here. I will follow anon."

"The sight of that man troubles you," said Marphise, noticing the direction of her friend's gaze. "Who is he? I must know."

Instead of making any reply to the question,

Marcelline sprang forward, and called out to Pomperant, "Away, or you are lost!"

But before he could move a step, even if he intended to depart, Marphise was by his side.

"You are a stranger in Marseilles!" she cried. "I arrest you as a spy."

"No, let him go; he is no spy," interposed Marcelline. "Imprudent that you are to come here," she added, in an under tone, to her lover.

"It is as I suspected!" cried Marphise. "I am certain he is from the enemy's camp. This man is also with him," she added, pointing to Hugues.

"If I tell you who he is, Marphise, will you allow him to depart?" whispered Marcelline.

"I know not that," rejoined the other. "But speak!"

"It is the Seigneur Pomperant," replied Marcelline.

"What! the friend of the traitor Bourbon!"

exclaimed the Amazon. "Do you imagine I will let *him* go? Never! I will rather hang him. Let thirty of the corps step forward and take charge of these men," she shouted.

The order was obeyed with surprising celerity, and Pomperant and Hugues were environed by a double row of spears.

"Take the prisoners before Renzo da Ceri," said the Amazon. "He will dispose of them."

"Marphise!" cried Marcelline, "if you have any love for me do not act thus. You need have no fear of the Seigneur Pomperant. I will answer for him with my life."

The Amazon reflected for a moment.

"Is he content to remain a prisoner on parole?" she demanded.

"Most assuredly," replied Marcelline.

"Let him answer for himself," cried the Amazon.

"Will you pledge your word that you will not

attempt to quit Marseilles without permission?" she added to Pomperant.

"Do not hesitate," whispered Marcelline. "If you are taken before Renzo or Chabot de Brion, you are lost."

"Now, your answer?" cried Marphise.

"I accept the conditions," he replied. "I will not attempt to escape, and I will be answerable for my attendant."

"Enough," replied Marphise. "You are at liberty. But be careful, or you may fall into the hands of those who will not deal with you as leniently as I have done."

Ordering the party around her to fall into rank, the Amazon put her steed in motion, and the troop marched out of the Place de Linche.

VIII.

SHOWING HOW THE BISHOP'S PALACE AND THE CHURCH OF
SAINT CANNAT WERE DEMOLISHED.

LEFT to his reflections, Pomperant was not altogether satisfied with what he had done. He was now a prisoner on parole, and could not return to the camp, or communicate in any way with Bourbon.

Had he yielded to the dictates of prudence, he would have sought some secure retreat for the day, and none appeared so eligible for the purpose as the tavern where he had breakfasted, but

the temptation to witness the progress of the siege was too strong to be resisted, and on quitting the Place de Linche he proceeded to a point whence a view of the ramparts could be obtained.

The cannonade was still going on as furiously as ever. A portion of the ramparts had been destroyed, and a new breach made in the walls. Still it was not yet large enough to allow a successful attack to be made. But it was evident that the besiegers were making every preparation for a speedy assault.

Supported by a tremendous fire from the batteries, and protected by mantelets, which they pushed on before them, a party of men advanced towards the fosse, and endeavoured to form a traverse by throwing into it a vast quantity of fascines, made of large boughs of trees tied together, fagots, hurdles, and bags and gabions full of earth and stones.

These operations could not be carried on with-

out great loss on the part of the besiegers. A terrific fire was directed against them by the arquebusiers from the ramparts and bastions. Notwithstanding this, the work proceeded. A detachment of arquebusiers, marching down from the camp, fixed palisades within thirty toises of the walls, whence they fired upon the defenders of the ramparts.

At this juncture another sortie was made by Chabot de Brion, and with better effect than that which he had undertaken earlier in the day. Not only did he force the arquebusiers to retire in disorder, causing great havoc among them, but he slaughtered most of the engineers engaged on the traverse. Such as escaped the sword were drowned in the fosse.

So rapidly was this achievement executed, that ere Pescara could reach the scene of action with his cavalry, Brion had re-entered the city.

Infuriated by the losses they had sustained, the

besiegers redoubled their efforts.

supplied the places of those who had perished, and the arquebusiers returned to their post. But success had heightened the ardour of the besieged, and stimulated them to greater exertions. Though the cannonade was continued without intermission throughout the day, the breach was not sufficiently enlarged for the assault.

Towards evening, however, the traverse was completed, though several parties of engineers had been destroyed in the task, and preparations were made to erect a gallery upon it. In spite of the constant severe fire from the ramparts and bastions—in spite of the stones and missiles hurled upon them—the engineers persisted in their work, and laboured with such resolution and assiduity, that, in less than an hour, a gallery, eight feet high and twelve wide, was put together. The sides were formed of double planks, the intervals being filled up with earth, and the pointed roof was covered

externally with raw hides, so as to prevent it from being set on fire.

A critical juncture had now arrived for the besieged. Had the breach been sufficiently large, the assault would inevitably have taken place, for Bourbon was fully prepared; but not only was the aperture insufficient, but it could be seen that a rear rampart had been erected, which would have to be stormed when the outer wall was carried.

Once more, therefore, the assault had to be deferred, and in consequence of this delay all the works which it had cost so many lives to execute were thrown away. Heavy cannon, placed on the bastions commanding this angle of the walls, were brought to bear upon the gallery, and the damage done by the shot enabled the besieged to set fire to it by means of burning barrels of pitch, which they hurled upon it. The whole fabric was soon in flames, and the conflagration, which was witnessed by the whole of the Imperial army, pro-

duced a very striking effect, as it illuminated all the ramparts, towers, and structures in its vicinity. Bourbon had thus the mortification of seeing the work, on which so much labour had been expended, utterly destroyed.

As soon as the gallery was consumed, and the blackened beams had fallen into the moat, the energetic commanders of the garrison ordered ladders to be brought, and a large party of men descended for the purpose of destroying the traverse. Before they could accomplish this, they were attacked by a strong detachment of Spanish infantry, and a desperate conflict took place. The Spaniards were driven back with great loss, but, as they were speedily reinforced, the besiegers were compelled to abandon the work and remount the walls.

Shortly after this occurrence, a council of war was held by Renzo da Ceri and Chabot de Brion in a large hall in the episcopal palace.

Ever since the commencement of the siege this splendid structure had been abandoned by the bishop, who had taken up his abode in a less exposed part of the city, and the palace was now occupied by troops. All the principal officers of the garrison were present, and Renzo announced to the meeting that it would be necessary to demolish the palace in which they stood, as well as the venerable church of Saint Cannat adjoining it, lest the besiegers should obtain possession of them.

"It grieves me sorely," he said, "to order the destruction of these noble edifices, endeared to the citizens of Marseilles by so many recollections. But there is no help for it. With the aid of Heaven, I trust we may keep off the foe. But should he pass the walls, we must afford him no shelter. The work must be commenced without delay."

Not a single dissentient voice was raised, but

the proposition was received with sadness. After a pause, Renzo added, "I perceive from your silence that you are all of my opinion. Let us now repair to the church of Saint Cannat, where mass will be celebrated for the last time."

The edifice which had thus been doomed to destruction was a fine old Gothic church, and, as we have just intimated, was held in especial veneration by the citizens. It was soon known that it was about to be demolished, and thousands flocked towards it to join in the sacred rites which were to be performed within it for the last time.

The interior of the church presented a very striking spectacle, the interest of which was heightened by the circumstances that had brought together such an assemblage. The aisles were filled with soldiers and armed citizens; and among the former were many whose grim visages showed they had been actively engaged in the recent

strife. In the nave was drawn up the corps of Amazons, with Marphise and Marcelline at their head. Within the choir stood Renzo da Ceri, Chabot de Brion, Mirandel, and all the principal officers, in their full accoutrements. The viguier and the chief magistrates of the city were likewise present. The Bishop of Marseilles, assisted by other ecclesiastical dignitaries, officiated at the altar, and never before in that fabric had mass been solemnised with such fervour and devotion as on that night.

The occasion, indeed, was one that could not fail to excite the profoundest interest in all who witnessed the ceremonial. Never more within those hallowed walls, which were so firmly built that they might have lasted for ages, would holy rites be performed. All those reverend objects, all those tombs and monuments, would be destroyed—all those shrines desecrated. It was a sad reflection, but it weighed upon every breast.

Among those gathered in the church were Pomperant and Hugues. They were stationed near one of the pillars that lined the north aisle within a few paces of Marcelline, who was aware of the proximity of her lover. An address was pronounced by the bishop, in which he deeply lamented the necessary destruction of this temple of the Most High, denouncing Bourbon as the cause of the sacrilege, and invoking Heaven's vengeance upon his head. It was not without a shudder that Pomperant listened to these awful words, and perceived the effect they produced on Marcelline.

Just as the bishop concluded his discourse, the thunder of artillery was heard, and Renzo da Ceri and some of the other leaders quitted the church, but the service was not otherwise interrupted. The corps of Amazons remained to the last, and Marcelline allowed her companions to march forth without her. She lingered behind to exchange a few

words with her lover. By this time the church was almost deserted, and they moved to a part of the aisle where the tapers, having been extinguished, left them almost in darkness.

"I ought to regard you as an enemy," she said. "I fear you are included in the denunciation which the good bishop has just pronounced upon Bourbon."

"Listen to me, Marcelline, and believe what I tell you," he rejoined. "The obstinacy of the citizens of Marseilles has rendered this siege necessary. They have brought all the calamities of war upon themselves. Why could they not act like the inhabitants of Aix and other towns of Provence?"

"Because they are loyal subjects of the king," she replied.

"These were not your sentiments when we first met," rejoined Pomperant. "You and your brother were then devoted to Bourbon."

"My brother is still devoted to him," she said. "Nay more, he is condemned to death by the Parliament of Paris for the share he has taken in the conspiracy, and if he had not fled, the sentence would have been executed. But I have changed. Since I have been in Marseilles, and have discoursed with these loyal and patriotic citizens, I have imbibed their opinions."

"You are wrong," rejoined Pomperant. "Marseilles will be far happier and more prosperous under Bourbon's rule than under that of François de Valois. A day will come—and that shortly—when Bourbon's name will be as much honoured in this city as it is now execrated."

"Heaven grant he may never enter Marseilles as a conqueror!" exclaimed Marcelline, fervently.

"Be not deceived, Marcelline. He will never retire till he has taken the city, and it cannot hold out long."

"You are mistaken," she cried, energetically.

"It will hold out till it is relieved by the king. But if its fall should be inevitable, it is the fixed determination of the citizens to burn it to the ground rather than Bourbon shall possess it. I have vowed to kill myself rather than fall into the hands of his ruthless soldiery."

"Your fears are groundless, I repeat," said Pomperant; "but if you have such apprehensions, why do you not leave the city? The port is open. You can easily gain the fleet."

"I have promised Marphise to remain here to the last, and I shall keep my word," she rejoined.

"Then I will stay and guard you," he said. "Oh, Marcelline! let not these differences separate us. I love you not the less devotedly because of your loyalty to François de Valois. Do not hate me for my attachment to Bourbon."

"But I am bound to regard you as a traitor," she rejoined.

"Not as a traitor to you," he replied. "I have

never swerved, even in thought, from my fidelity to you."

"Talk to me no more of love," she cried. "I have steeled my breast against all the softer emotions. But we must separate. Those who are engaged to demolish this saintly pile are about to commence their task. Farewell!"

And she quitted the church by a side-door.

A number of priests and friars now entered the fane, and proceeded to remove all the sacred vessels, reliques, and other objects from the sacristy and from the various shrines. The great silver crucifix, and the tall silver candlesticks, were carried away from the altar.

While this was going on, a large band of workmen, armed with pickaxes, shovels, and bars of iron, had set to work to pull down the monuments and open the tombs, and the church resounded with the noise of their implements.

Ere long a great number of ancient coffins were

disinterred—some of stone and some of mouldering wood, and from the former the dead were taken. Coffins and corpses were then laid upon litters, and taken out of the church, to be deposited in a more secure spot—the bearers being headed by a procession of priests and monks.

As soon as they were gone, the church, which had thus been despoiled of its treasures and its dead, was given up to the destroyer.

The work of demolition immediately commenced, hundreds being employed in the task, which was superintended by experienced engineers. Gunpowder was used to accelerate the operations, and before morning the reverend and beautiful fabric was little better than a heap of ruins, the roof gone, the pillars in the aisles undermined and thrown down, and the walls demolished. The most determined enemy could not have done the work quicker than it was executed by the patriotic citizens, and they ceased not in

their task till the holy pile was razed to the ground. The stones and beams that had composed it were employed in barricading the streets.

As Pomperant and Hugues were in the church when the work of demolition commenced, they were compelled to join in it, and they both laboured as industriously as the rest, till relieved by a fresh party.

When Pomperant escaped from the irksome task imposed upon him by necessity, he found that a multitude of citizens and soldiers were employed in pulling down the bishop's palace. Explosion after explosion shook the house to its foundations, and the walls fell with a tremendous crash.

The good bishop stood by, watching the destruction of his palace, and expressed no regret, but encouraged the soldiers and citizens in their task. But when the entire fabric fell to the ground, his looks expressed the deepest emotion, and he turned away and quitted the spot.

So complete was the destruction, that it seemed

as if it had been caused by an earthquake. But again the active soldiers were at work, and the remains of the late noble edifice were expeditiously removed.

Much had been accomplished during that night—more than Pomperant, who could not tear himself from the scene, supposed possible. A stately palace, embellished by charming gardens, and a large church had been utterly destroyed, and a great portion of the wreck of both buildings carried away, and employed, as we have said, in barricading the streets, and in the construction of other defensive works.

“If Bourbon should carry yon walls by assault to-day, he will find no shelter here,” remarked Pomperant to Hugues.

“And the barricades must be taken before he can get into the city,” rejoined Hugues. “These citizens of Marseilles, it must be owned, are good workmen.”

IX.

LES TRANCHÉES DES DAMES.

GREATLY to the surprise of the citizens, who expected a renewal of the tremendous cannonade which had been carried on during the two previous days, the firing on the part of the besiegers now ceased. As this complete cessation of hostilities endured throughout the day, and as the night passed without disturbance, the general opinion prevailed that Bourbon, admonished by his recent failure, was about to raise the siege and retire.

But this opinion was not shared by Renzo da

Ceri and the leaders of the garrison. They felt certain that a new plan of action was about to be adopted by the besiegers; and the supposition was soon shown to be correct. It was found that Bourbon was approaching the walls by sap, and had already made considerable advance before the discovery of his plan was made. It was now evident that, despairing of making a sufficient breach with his cannon, he was proceeding to undermine the walls, and level them with gunpowder.

As soon as Renzo da Ceri discovered the enemy's design, which was revealed to him during a sortie made with that object, he set to work to defeat it, and immediately ordered trenches to be cut near the walls, so as to enable him to prepare counter-mines. These works were at once commenced, and were carried on with the same zeal and spirit that had been displayed during the previous operations. But as these trenches and subterranean galleries were to be of great depth as well

as length, and must be completed within a short space of time, extraordinary exertions were required. Thousands of active citizens offered their services, and worked like regular pioneers.

On hearing what was to be done, Marphise and Marcelline, accompanied by the corps of Amazons, sought an interview with the commander, who received them somewhat ungraciously.

"What would you with me?" he said. "This is no time for trifling. I want men, not women."

"We can work as well as men," replied Marphise, boldly. "We ask to be employed in digging the trenches."

"I admire your spirit, and thank you for the offer," said Renzo; "but such rough work as this is unfit for your delicate hands."

"We will show you what women can do, if you deign to employ us," urged Marphise. "Our example will serve to animate the citizens, and will teach the enemy what they have to expect."

"Again I say, you overrate your own powers," rejoined Renzo. "The work is such as would tax the strength of the stoutest pioneer. You will soon be compelled to abandon it."

"Have no such fear," cried Marcelline, resolutely. "I speak in the name of the whole corps. If we commence the work, we will carry it through. Will we not?" she added, appealing to them.

All the Amazons shouted an affirmative.

"We demand to be employed," said Marphise, warmly. "We will take no refusal."

"Well, since you are resolved, I will not attempt to dissuade you further," said Renzo, smiling. "You have my full permission to work at the trenches."

This response was received by a loud and ringing shout from the whole body of the Amazons.

"You will not regret granting us permission, monseigneur," said Marcelline. "But we must

further stipulate that none but women be allowed to work at our trench."

"That is but fair," replied the commandant. "I unhesitatingly agree to the condition. The whole honour of the work shall be yours; and if you achieve it, your names will ever occupy the proudest page in the annals of your city."

This speech was received with another shout from the female corps.

"Conduct us to the spot where the trench is to be opened, and we will begin at once," said Marphise.

Yielding to the request, Renzo proceeded with the gallant little band towards the Tour de Saint Paul, where he marked out a spot adjoining the walls. Experienced pioneers explained to the Amazons the nature of the work they would have to perform, and supplied them with the necessary implements. This done they retired, and the resolute damsels having divested themselves of their

helmets and breastplates, immediately set to work, their operations being watched with great curiosity by the soldiers stationed on the adjacent tower, and by those on the ramparts.

They pursued their task with an unflagging energy that excited the admiration of all who beheld them, and in a few hours the trenches were fairly opened. Marphise and Marcelline were foremost in the work, and, as they came forth from the excavation to rest for a short time from their toil, and allow others to take their place, they perceived Pomperant watching them from a distance.

This undertaking caused a great sensation throughout the city, and before long dames and damsels of all ranks flocked to the trenches, and zealously assisted in the operations, which were continued night and day without interruption—one band being immediately relieved by another. Marphise and Marcelline passed three entire days

and as many nights in the trenches, and during that interval allowed themselves but little repose.

On the morning of the fourth day the work was complete. A long subterranean gallery, about five feet square, had been excavated, having chambers at intervals, carried below the foundation of the walls, in which powder could be deposited. As Renzo da Ceri examined the work, he was struck with astonishment.

"I could not have believed this could have been done had I not seen it," he exclaimed. "These trenches are marvellously executed. If this siege is memorable for nothing else, it will be for this unparalleled achievement. While Marseilles shall endure, these trenches will never be forgotten."

Renzo's words have come to pass. The Boulevard des Dames of the modern city of Marseilles is so designated because it occupies the site of the famous Ladies' Trenches.

X.

HOW POMPERANT FURNISHED A SAFE-CONDUCT TO THE
DEPUTIES TO THE KING.

IN less than a week Renzo da Ceri had completed his vast defensive operations.

In this interval a fosse of great depth had been cut behind that part of the walls most exposed to the fire of the enemy. Not only was it intended that this fosse should be filled with powder, petards, and caltrops, but it was flanked by high ramparts, so that in reality a second line of fortifications would have to be taken if the outer walls should

be carried. But though Renzo was firmly persuaded he could hold out, he felt that the king ought to be made acquainted with the exact condition of the city, so that his majesty might take such measures as he should deem necessary for its relief.

Intelligence had been received through the fleet that François was at Avignon with his army, but the difficulty was how to communicate with him. At last the commander bethought him of Pierre Cépède and Jean Bégue, two citizens distinguished for their courage and loyalty, and proposed the errand to them, and they at once agreed to undertake it.

"I thank you, messieurs, for your ready compliance with my request," said Renzo. "If you should be taken, I do not think any harm will befall you. I can compel Bourbon to set you free. You look surprised, but I will explain my meaning. Last night I made a prisoner of great im-

portance. The Seigneur Pomperant, Bourbon's favourite, has had the foolhardiness to venture within the city, and I should have ordered him for immediate execution, had not the idea occurred to me that I could turn him to account. What ho, there!" he added to the guard. "Bring in the prisoners."

Presently Pomperant and Hugues were brought in, guarded by halberdiers. Both maintained an undaunted demeanour.

"Seigneur Pomperant," said Renzo, sternly, "I know you are Bourbon's chief favourite, and that he will gladly purchase your safety. I shall therefore keep you as a hostage for these two gentlemen, who are going as deputies to the king. You must furnish them with a safe-conduct."

"Even if I were inclined to do so, monseigneur, I lack the power," rejoined Pomperant.

"I will show you how to do it," said Renzo. "Sit down at that table, and write a letter to

Charles de Bourbon, telling him you are my prisoner, and that you have engaged to protect Pierre Cépède and Jean Bégue from all harm and interruption. Add, that if they return to Marseilles in safety, I will set you free, but if they are detained or molested, I will hang you in the sight of the whole Imperial army."

"If I write as you desire, the Duke de Bourbon will not respect my letter," said Pomperant. "But if you carry out your threat, I warn you that terrible retribution will follow."

"I will take my chance of that," rejoined Benzo. "If you are wise, you will save yourself from an ignominious death. Refuse to write as I have dictated, and I will forthwith hang you as a spy."

"Methinks you had better agree to these conditions, monseigneur," said Hugues. "If you decline, they will doubtless hang me at the same time."

"You judge rightly, fellow," remarked Benzo. "You will share the same fate as your master."

"Then, in Heaven's name, comply, monseigneur," implored Hugues.

Pomperant sat down and wrote the required letter. When he had done so, he gave it to Renzo, who, after scanning it, delivered it to the deputies.

"There is your safe-conduct, messieurs," he said.
"You will start on your expedition to-night."

Then, turning to Pomperant, he added, "Fear not that I will act loyally towards you, Seigneur Pomperant. You have been condemned to death as a traitor by the Parliament of Paris, but I shall not regard the decree. I look upon you only as a prisoner of war. On the return of these gentlemen, I will liberate you and your attendant. Meantime, you will both remain close prisoners."

Pomperant and Hugues were then removed by the guard, and were conducted to the tower of Saint Paul, where they were locked up in separate dungeons.

XI.

HOW TOULON WAS BESIEGED AND TAKEN BY THE MARQUIS
DEL VASTO.

"MORE powder and larger cannon must be had, or a sufficiently wide breach in the walls cannot be made," remarked Pescara to Bourbon, as they sat together in the tent of the latter. "But where are these requisites to be procured?"

"In Toulon. In that fortress there are plenty of cannon of far larger calibre than ours, together with abundance of powder and ball."

"But Toulon has yet to be taken. That may

be a work of some time, since the fortress is strong."

"The siege ought not to occupy more than a week," rejoined Bourbon. "I shall send your valiant nephew, the Marquis del Vasto, to besiege the place by land. He will be supported by Monçada, who is lying off the coast, as you know, and no interference is to be apprehended from the French fleet, as La Fayette and Andrea Doria are fully occupied in guarding the port of Marseilles. The capture of Toulon may therefore be regarded as certain."

"The plan appears practicable," said Pescara, after some reflection; "and since you are resolved upon it, the sooner it is executed the better. Del Vasto will like the enterprise."

"I am sure of it," replied Bourbon. "I will ride down at once to his camp and give him instructions. It is but a day's march to Toulon, and

he will appear before the fortress ere any tidings can be given of his approach."

As had been anticipated, the gallant young marquis received the command with delight, and at once prepared for the expedition.

Taking with him a large detachment of the Spanish forces, he marched throughout the night, and appeared at dawn on the crest of the hills overlooking Toulon. At the same time, the Spanish fleet under Admiral Monçada, who had received instructions from Bourbon, entered the roadstead, and took up a position opposite the fortress, which immediately opened fire upon the enemy.

At this epoch the Castle of Toulon was a place of great strength, and its ramparts mounted a considerable number of guns of large size. Notwithstanding this, the combined attack by land and sea was successful, and on the fourth day from the commencement of the siege, Del Vasto became master of the fortress. Irritated by the obstinate defence

he had encountered, and the heavy losses he had sustained, the young Spanish general put the garrison to the sword.

All the large cannon found within the fort, together with an immense stock of the munitions of war, were placed on board the fleet, and after being safely landed, were conveyed to the Imperial camp; thus providing Bourbon with abundant materials for prosecuting the siege of Marseilles with vigour. As may be supposed, Del Vasto received high commendations from the duke for his brilliant achievement.

Meanwhile, despatches from his royal allies had reached Bourbon. The Emperor informed him, by a letter brought by the Comte de Montfort, that the army of Catalonia would speedily enter France.

"Tell the Emperor," said Bourbon, well pleased by the intelligence, "that I hope to send him in a few days the good news of the fall of Marseilles.

In anticipation of that event, entreat him to hasten as much as possible the march of the auxiliary army, and entreat him also to strengthen his fleet, which is inferior to that commanded by La Fayette and Andrea Doria. Things could not go better than they do at present. I shall soon be in a condition to give battle to François de Valois—and if I win it—and by Sainte Barbe I *shall* win it!—his Imperial Majesty will be the greatest monarch that ever reigned, and able to give law to all Christendom.”

Charged with this message, the Comte de Montfort departed.

From Henry VIII. Bourbon received the sum of a hundred thousand ducats, which was brought by Sir John Russell.

“Tell your royal master,” he said to Russell, “that the time has now arrived when it will be needful to march his army into Picardy. Fifteen days hence, at the latest, I trust to be joined by

the auxiliary forces about to be despatched by the Emperor from Catalonia. By that time Marseilles will have fallen."

"Your highness feels sure of that?" remarked the English envoy, with an incredulous smile.

"I am certain of it," said Bourbon, confidently. "The besieged have made a gallant defence, but they cannot hold out much longer. My approaches are now within a few toises of the moat. I have plenty of cannon of the largest calibre, which will soon make a breach in the walls."

"But I am told by Pescara that there is an inner fosse of great depth, filled with combustibles, and a second line of ramparts with cannon mounted on the embrasures," remarked Sir John Russell.

"No matter," rejoined Bourbon. "I will take the city in spite of its defences, and, having done so, I shall withdraw to Aix, where I shall await the arrival of the Catalonian army. On being joined by it, I shall at once march to Avignon,

and compel François to give me battle. If I am victorious, your royal master will be King of France."

"It will rejoice his majesty and the Lord Cardinal to learn that your highness is so confident of success," replied Russell. "I now take my leave, and shall return at once to England."

Sir John Russell had not long been gone, when a great noise was heard outside the tent, and, surprised at the disturbance, Bourbon rushed out to ascertain the cause of it.

"What means this noise?" he demanded of several arquebusiers, who were standing around, and whose countenances manifested alarm. "Is the enemy upon us?"

"Worse than that, general," replied one of the men. "A great shot from the accursed 'Basilisk' has just fallen upon the Marquis of Pescara's tent," pointing in that direction. "Your highness may see the rent it has made."

"Great Heavens!" ejaculated Bourbon. "But the marquis!—is he safe?"

"Alas, general, I much fear he is killed," replied the arquebusier. "He was at mass at the time with his confessor, Padre Hilario."

Bourbon heard no more, but flew to the tent. On entering it, a terrible spectacle met his gaze. On the ground lay the mangled body of Padre Hilario, and near the unfortunate priest lay two Spanish officers, one of whom had been beheaded by the huge shot. Pescara was standing near the ghastly group, so bespattered with blood that Bourbon fancied he must be grievously wounded. A strange laugh, however, from the Spanish general convinced him to the contrary.

"I have had a very narrow escape," said Pescara. "If I had not knelt on this side of poor Padre Hilario, I should have shared his fate. The besieged have learned to take better aim with 'The Basilisk' than they did at first. Your high-

ness sees what messengers they send us," he added, in a tone of bitter raillery. "I suppose you thought the shouts were caused by the timorous magistrates of Marseilles bringing you the keys of the city—ha! ha!"

Bourbon made no reply to this ill-timed jest, but instantly quitted the tent.

Next day, the Marquis del Vasto was sent to propose terms of surrender to the garrison. He was accompanied by twenty lances, and preceded by a herald and a trumpeter, and the errand of this little troupe being evidently pacific, it was allowed to approach the Porte d'Aix without molestation.

On arriving before the gate, the trumpeter thrice sounded his clarion, and when the bruit ceased, an officer from the battlements, addressing the herald, demanded his business.

"The most noble Marquis del Vasto desires an audience of the commanders of the garrison, to lay before them a proposition from his Highness the

Duke de Bourbon, general-in-chief of the Imperial army."

"Tarry till I ascertain the pleasure of the commanders," rejoined the officer.

After a time the officer reappeared on the battlements, and announced that the Marquis del Vasto could alone be admitted.

"His lordship may enter without fear," said the officer. "I am authorised by the commanders of the garrison to guarantee his safety."

On this the drawbridge was lowered, and the gate being thrown open, a strong guard of halberdiers issued forth, and lined the bridge.

Del Vasto then dismounted, and, crossing the bridge, was met at the gate by the officer, who conducted him to a chamber on the basement floor of the tower, ordinarily used as a guard-room. Here he found two knightly personages, both completely cased in steel, whom he recognised as the commanders of the garrison.

"I am sent to you, messeigneurs," said Del

Vasto, after formal salutations had passed, "to make a proposition which I trust may be entertained. Conceiving himself to be in a position to take this city, which you have so long and so ably defended, his Highness the Duke de Bourbon, influenced by feelings of humanity, before making the assault, has determined to afford you the opportunity of capitulating on terms, consistent with your own honour, and highly advantageous to the city."

"It is needless to state the terms, my lord marquis," replied Chabot de Brion, haughtily. "We cannot listen to them."

"Do not reject the proposal unheard, messeigneurs," said Del Vasto. "Have some consideration for the citizens."

"You have taught us what to expect, marquis, by your treatment of the garrison of Toulon," rejoined Renzo, sternly. "But we are not to be terrified. Tell your leader, Charles de Bourbon,

to take Marseilles—if he can. We will only treat with him at the cannon's mouth."

"You will have reason to repent your bold determination, messeigneurs," rejoined Del Vasto. "Before departing, I would say a word in regard to the Seigneur Pomperant, who has fallen into your hands. Are you willing to make an exchange of prisoners? You shall have a dozen of your own officers for him."

"Offer us twenty, and add twenty to those, and we will not part with him," rejoined Renzo. "Tell Bourbon so."

With a proud salutation Del Vasto then departed. Conducted to the gate by the officer, he passed through the guard lining the drawbridge, mounted his charger, and rode back to the camp, where he related what had occurred to Bourbon and Pescara.

"I felt sure the garrison would not capitulate," said the latter.

"What of Pomperant?" demanded Bourbon, eagerly. "Will they exchange him?"

"No, your highness, they absolutely refuse," replied Del Vasto. "But I do not imagine he is in any danger. They have some motive for detaining him."

"Possibly," said Bourbon. "We shall learn what it is in time."

XII.

AVIGNON.

ROUSED to exertion by the danger that menaced his kingdom, François I. hastened to reinforce his army, which had been greatly reduced by Bon-nivet's reverses in the Milanese, and in a few weeks after Bourbon's irruption into Provence, he had succeeded in augmenting it by fourteen thousand Swiss mercenaries, six thousand lansquenets, and fifteen hundred light horse.

Placing himself at the head of this force, he marched to Lyons, where he was joined by the

King of Navarre and several foreign princes. Almost all the nobles, on whose aid Bourbon had counted, flocked round the king's standard, bringing with them large companies of horse, so that he had now a very numerous army—the three divisions which were placed under the command of Marshals Chabannes, Foix, and Montmorency.

Continuing his march along the left bank of the Rhône, François pitched his camp at Avignon, and again surrendered himself to pleasure, passing his time in such festivities as he was wont to indulge in at Blois and Fontainebleau. In the old Papal palace of Avignon—an enormous structure, part convent and part castle—he held his court, and its gloomy halls and chambers were enlivened by the presence of troops of young nobles decked out in gay attire, and echoed to the light laugh of the numerous frolic dames who ever accompanied the luxurious monarch.

Bonnivet was with his royal master at Avignon.

In spite of the favourite's reverses in the Milanese, he had lost none of his influence, and easily persuaded the king that it was necessary to his glory to recover possession of the lost duchy of Milan, and that if he appeared at the head of an army in Italy, this object would infallibly be accomplished. François therefore determined upon a new expedition as soon as he should have driven Bourbon out of Provence.

Subjugated by the charms of the resistless Diane de Poitiers, who had now completely supplanted the Comtesse de Châteaubriand, unable to tear himself from her, encouraged in his luxurious idleness by Bonnivet, Saint-Marsault, and others of his courtiers, the king wasted his time in the pleasant city of Avignon, dreaming of conquests which he meant to achieve, and allowing Bourbon to prosecute the siege of Marseilles unmolested.

Attended by a mirthful train, Diane and the king made a pilgrimage to Vaucluse, and, after

quaffing of the classic fountain, François carved the name of his mistress, linked with his own, on the walls of the grotto.

One day it chanced that François and Diane were stationed on the balcony over the gate of the Papal palace—an elevated spot whence the sovereign-pontiffs who had inhabited the palace were accustomed to pronounce their benediction upon the people, as they would have done from the windows of the Vatican had Rome been free to them. Chance had brought the amorous pair to the balcony. For the last hour they had been strolling round the lofty walls of the palace. Vainly had Diane essayed to count the spires that rose around her—nowhere are there so many churches as in Avignon—and as if to confuse her still further, their bells all rang out at once. Half distracted by the deafening clamour, she turned to the towering cathedral, where Popes were enthroned, and where Popes lie buried. From the contemplation of Notre-Dame des Dons, as the

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mighty edifice is designated, she turned to gaze upon the camp, which occupied the whole of the plain lying between the junction of the rapid Durance and the rushing Rhône. The long rows of tents, mingled with pavilions decorated with pennons and banners, formed a picture of surpassing beauty.

By this time the bells had ceased ringing, and François was able to resume the tender converse which the clamour had interrupted.

Thus beguiling the time, now gazing at one point of the ancient city, now at another; sometimes looking at the cathedral, at the fortifications, at the vast tract of country traversed by the Rhône, at the mountains, or at the camp, they found themselves in the balcony overlooking the gateway. Here, seated on a marble bench, which had been once used by the Popes, they continued their discourse, while the young nobles and dames in attendance ranged themselves behind them.

The balcony where the king and Diane sat commanded a wide open space in front of the gateway, which was defended by a dry moat and drawbridge. Perceiving two horsemen, escorted by an officer and half a dozen mounted men-at-arms, approach the gateway, and being struck by their appearance, François despatched Bonnivet, who was standing among the group of courtiers, to make inquiries concerning them.

After the lapse of a few minutes Bonnivet reappeared, accompanied by the two strangers, both of whom were men of middle age, grave deportment, and plain attire, and presented them to the king as Messieurs Pierre Cépède and Jean Bégue, deputies from Marseilles.

"I have not waited for permission to bring these brave and loyal citizens before your majesty," said Bonnivet, "because I felt certain you would grant them an immediate audience."

"You did right," rejoined François. "Rise, messieurs," he added to the kneeling deputies.

"You are welcome. You must have run great risk in coming hither. How did you contrive to elude the vigilance of the foe?"

"Heaven has aided us, sire," replied Pierre Cépède. "All the approaches to the city, on the land side, are so strictly guarded, that certain destruction would have attended any attempt at exit in that direction. We were, therefore, compelled to pass out at the port; and not without much difficulty and danger reached the mouth of the Rhône. We came up the river to Arles, and thence, with as little delay as possible, to this city."

"You have done well," replied François, approvingly. "What tidings do you bring me of my faithful city of Marseilles?"

"The city still holds out, sire," said Pierre Cépède; "and its defences have been so greatly strengthened, that no uneasiness whatever was felt by the commanders until the enemy obtained possession of the heavy artillery from Toulon."

“Ha!” exclaimed François, surprised and angry. “How is this? I did not know that Toulon had fallen.”

“The news only arrived this morning, sire,” interposed Bonnivet. “I was unwilling to trouble your majesty by mentioning it.”

“It should not have been kept from me for a single moment,” cried the king, sharply. “By Saint Denis! this is a great disaster. Where was my fleet at the time? How came La Fayette and Doria to let Toulon be taken?”

“Sire, they could not leave the port of Marseilles,” returned Jean Bégue. “The fall of Toulon is a heavy blow, but the fall of Marseilles would be still heavier. Listen to the prayers of the citizens, sire, and come to their relief. You do not know what exertions they have made for the defence of the city—what heroism they have displayed. No sacrifices have been too great. Our noblest and fairest dames have formed themselves into


bands, and have worked at the trenches like pioneers. Oh, madame!" he continued, addressing Diane, "if you could only behold what they have done, you would be filled with admiration. For three days and three nights they laboured incessantly. We are proud of our women, madame."

"And with good reason," rejoined Diane. "Oh, sire! you must fly to the rescue of this devoted city. You will ever reproach yourself if it should fall."

Both the deputies looked gratefully at her as these words were uttered.

"Is there immediate danger, messieurs?" demanded the king.

"No, sire," replied Pierre Cépède. "We have endeavoured to explain to your majesty the exact condition of the city. Its defences are as complete as they can be made. We have brave and experienced commanders, and our citizens are animated by loyalty and devotion. But we have an enemy



opposed to us, skilful, daring, and confident of success. If *Marseilles can* be taken, Charles de Bourbon will take it."

"It never shall be taken," cried François. "Return to your fellow-citizens, messieurs. Tell them how highly I estimate their courage and loyalty. Say that I will forthwith send them from Martigues a reinforcement of fifteen hundred men-at-arms, with good store of wine, cattle, and provender. Bid them persevere in their valiant defence of the city. They may rest assured that I will come to their succour. Farewell, ~~m~~essieurs! In good time I will adequately requite the important service you have rendered me."

Well satisfied with these assurances, the deputies withdrew.

Next day, the king marched with his whole army towards Aix. On learning that he was approaching, the viguier and the magistrates, dreading his resentment, rode forth from the city to

meet him, and strove to excuse themselves for the welcome they had given to Bourbon. François fiercely interrupted them, calling out,

“Ha, knaves! ha, traitors! You have opened your gates to a rebel in arms against us and our kingdom. You received him with all honour, allowed him to usurp the title of Comte de Provence, which belongs to us, and took the oath of fidelity to him, in violation of your allegiance to us your lawful sovereign. You deserve death, and you shall die.”

“Spare us, sire! spare us!” cried the viguier and the others, throwing themselves at his feet. “We now see the enormity of our offence.”

“Repentance comes too late. I will have no pity upon you, vile traitors,” rejoined the king, sternly. “From your fate your misguided fellow-citizens shall learn what it is to incur our displeasure. Away with them!” he added to the guard. “Let them be taken back to the city, and decapi-

tated in the place in front of the Cathedral of Saint Sauveur. Set their heads on the gates, so that all may see how treason is punished."

This severe sentence was carried into effect. As the king entered Aix, he looked up at the gates, and beheld the heads of the unfortunate viguier and his brother-magistrates.

Not content with punishing the chief offenders, François compelled all the principal citizens and all public officers to renew their oaths of allegiance to him, and imprisoned several who were proved to have displayed zeal for the rebel chief.

Diane de Poitiers accompanied the king to Aix, and it was arranged that she should occupy the old palace of René d'Anjou, while her royal lover moved on to succour Marseilles.

XIII.

HOW POMPERANT WAS ORDERED FOR EXECUTION.

EVER since the departure of the two deputies to Avignon, Pomperant had been kept in strict confinement in the Tour de Saint Paul. One morning the door of his dungeon was opened by an officer, whose sombre looks proclaimed his errand.

"You are come to bid me prepare for death, I perceive, captain," said Pomperant, with as much composure as he could command.

"You have guessed rightly, monseigneur," re-

plied the officer. "The two deputies have been captured, and unless they are liberated before noon you will be executed. A message has been sent to that effect to the Duke de Bourbon."

"At least the commanders will let me die as becomes a gentleman—not as a common malefactor?" said Pomperant.

"I cannot give you that consolation, monseigneur," rejoined the officer. "You are to be hanged from the summit of this tower in face of the hostile army. The execution will take place precisely at noon. You have yet an hour to live."

"An hour! Is that all?" mentally ejaculated Pomperant.

"Send a priest to me, I pray you, captain," he said, with forced calmness. "I would fain make my peace with Heaven."

The officer then withdrew, and shortly afterwards a priest entered, who received the prisoner's confession, and gave him absolution.

"I will leave you now, my son," said the holy man, "but I shall remain without, and will attend you at the last."

Pomperant had not been long alone, when the door of the cell again opened, and gave admittance to Marcelline. A sad greeting passed between them.

"I have striven to save you," she said, in a voice half suffocated by emotion. "I have been to Renzo da Ceri, and have implored him, on my bended knees, to spare your life—but in vain. He will not even grant you the respite of an hour. All I could obtain was permission to hold this brief interview with you."

"I thank him for the grace—it is more than I expected," replied Pomperant, gazing at her with the deepest affection. "Oh ! Marcelline, you have made life so dear to me that I grieve to lose it. But the thought that you love me will soothe the pangs of death."

"It may console you to be assured that I will wed no other," she rejoined. "I will be true to your memory—doubt it not. As soon as this siege is ended, I will enter a convent, and devote myself to Heaven."

At this moment the priest entered the cell.

"Daughter," said the good man, looking compassionately at her, "you must bid your lover an eternal farewell."

"Oh no, no—do not say so, father!" she rejoined. "Grant me a few more minutes."

"Alas, daughter, I have no power to comply with your request."

"Nay, you must go, dear Marcelline," said Pomperant. "Your presence will only unman me. Farewell for ever!"

Marcelline continued gazing passionately at her lover, while the priest drew her gently from the cell.

Overcome by emotion, Pomperant sank down on

a seat, and he had scarcely regained his firmness, when the door of the cell was thrown suddenly open. Nothing doubting that it was the guard come to conduct him to execution, he arose and prepared for departure.

What was his surprise, when Marcelline, half frenzied with joy, again burst into the dungeon, exclaiming,

“Saved! saved! They are come!”

The sudden revulsion of feeling was almost too much for Pomperant, and he could scarcely sustain Marcelline as she flung herself into his arms.

“Is this a dream?” he said, gazing at her, as if doubting the evidence of his senses. “Methought we had parted for ever.”

“No, I have come to tell you you are saved,” she rejoined. “The deputies have returned. You are free!”

As the words were uttered, Renzo da Ceri, accompanied by the two deputies, and followed by the officer, entered the cell.

"I have come to perform my promise, Seigneur Pomperant," said Renzo. "These gentlemen having been released, you are free to return to your camp. You may congratulate yourself on your escape. A few minutes more and it would have been too late. The escort that brought the two deputies from the camp galloped all the way, and has only just reached the gates."

"We also have reason to congratulate ourselves," remarked Pierre Cépède. "Had we arrived too late, we should have been taken back for instant execution."

"Conduct the Seigneur Pomperant to the Porte d'Aix, where the escort awaits him," said Renzo to the officer. "Let his attendant go with him."

"The orders shall be obeyed," said the officer.

Bidding a tender adieu to Marcelline, and expressing a fervent hope that they might meet again, Pomperant thanked the commander for his honourable conduct, and quitted the cell with the officer.

On issuing from the tower, he found Hugues standing in the midst of a guard of halberdiers, and the faithful fellow expressed the liveliest satisfaction at beholding him. But not a moment was allowed for explanation. They were hurried to the gate through a crowd of soldiers and armed citizens.

On the farther side of the drawbridge, which was strongly guarded, stood the escort. Joining it without delay, they mounted the steeds provided for them, and the whole party then galloped off to the camp.

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